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Parliament certain: Sheikh Saad

KUWAIT, April 17. (Kuna): His Highness Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah yesterday asserted that revival of parliamentary life in Kuwait is "an undisputed certainty", emphasising that the country's political leadership was resolved to consolidate democracy.

The Crown Prince added, in a press statement, he will report today to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah on the outcome of a series of his "national dialogue" meetings with citizens and former parliamentarians on revival of parliamentary

life, last suspended in 1986.

HH Sheikh Saad earlier yesterday had the last such meeting with private citizens, including some 70 deputies of the dissolved national assembly.

Sheikh Saad told his audience today: "The return of parliamentary life — as his Highness the Amir has pointed out before — is an undisputed certainty and the (country's) political leadership is keen on consolidating democracy while ensuring the country's future shakeups."

The Crown Prince expressed satisfaction with "the candour, clarity and friendly spirit"

which characterised his meeting today with the former deputies.

He also praised the citizens' favourable response and their interest in actively participating in national dialogue which focused on how to bring the parliament back to life "on solid ground that would guarantee continuation and stability and strengthen the country's security and national unity."

A Kuwaiti newspaper today called upon the country's leadership to work out a formula that would guarantee people's participation in decision-making and non-recurrence of past

errors.

The daily, in an editorial comment on the conclusion on Monday of national dialogue sessions between the government and representatives of various sectors of the community, stressed that the exchange has reached several points of agreement.

The dialogue was conducted in a truly democratic and frank atmosphere, where all ideas were discussed without reservations and even when views differed, the exchange remained cordial and positive, the paper said.

Saddam digs in

Orders issued for chem-retaliation to N-attack Firm at centre of gun row linked to murdered gunmaker

BAGHDAD, April 17. (Agencies): President Saddam Hussein said in the event of an Israeli nuclear attack, he has instructed his commanders to hit Israel with chemical weapons without waiting for orders, the state-run media reported today.

Several newspapers and the Iraqi News Agency said Saddam made the disclosure last week during talks with a group of six visiting US senators headed by Republican minority leader Robert Dole.

"I know that chemical weapons are prohibited by the Geneva protocol, which Iraq has

signed," he was quoted as saying. "But are chemical weapons more dangerous than atomic bombs?"

"I repeat to you what I announced before. If Israel hits us then we will hit back," Saddam said, adding: "I will never apologise for what I announced."

The 1925 Geneva protocol forbids the use of chemical weapons but not their manufacture or stockpiling. It has no enforcement provisions.

Saddam had earlier announced that in the event of an Israeli attack on Iraqi installations, his nation would retaliate with advanced binary chemical weapons.



Israeli police pull Daoud Kuttab, a Palestinian journalist as Greek Orthodox clergy and Arab Christians protest in front of the new Jewish settlement in the Christian quarter of the Old City. Kuttab was released after police pushed him into the settler's building, but the protest was not allowed to be held (Reuters wirephoto)

Soviet jets in Jeddah 1m copies of Quran for Soviet Muslims

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, April 17. (AP): The first of 30 Aeroflot flights landed yesterday in this Saudi Arabian port city to airlift one million copies of the Holy Quran to the Soviet Union to be distributed among Muslims there as a gift from King Fahd.

The operation is being organised by the Makkah based Muslim World League.

This kingdom, which harbours Islam's holiest shrines, has no formal diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. But the Aeroflot landings in Jeddah are part of growing links outside the city.

The atmosphere of the Soviet Union resulting from the policies of President Mikhail S. Gorbachev allowed the royal gift, said the league's Secretary-General, Abdullah Omar Naseef.

The copies of the Muslim holy book to be sent to the Soviet Muslim's were printed in Arabic at the King Fahd printing complex in Madinah.

An additional 300 translations of the hadith, or centuries of interpretations of the Holy Quran, in the language of the Turkistan region are being prepared for export.

5 'guilty'; sanctions urged on N - cheats

WASHINGTON, April 17. (AP): Pakistan, India, Argentina, Brazil and Iraq have been able to circumvent international regulations to build or expand nuclear weapons capabilities, a research organisation reported today.

To deter these practices, the report recommended that the United States and other supplier countries threaten to use economic and military sanctions as penalties.

The researchers also recommended that traditional nuclear suppliers ensure rigorous enforcement of their common nuclear export guidelines.

The report said West Germany has been the "weak link" in the multilateral export control system and must enact legislation to tighten export control laws.

NEWSWATCH

Mass demonstrations: Iraq's main opposition group said on Tuesday its supporters held mass demonstrations over the past three days against the clerical government in Tehran.

The Baghdad-based Mujahideen Khalki told Reuters in a telegram that thousands of demonstrators assembled in Mellat Park in north Tehran "in protest demonstrations against the leaders of the mullahs' regime in Tehran."

It quoted reports from the Iranian capital as saying armed guards opened fire to disperse the demonstrators and severely beat up some of them, breaking some arms and legs.

The guards arrested a large number of demonstrators on Saturday and Sunday, the statement added. (Reuters)

Militants threaten rabbi: Jewish zealots left a bullet on the doorstep of an Israeli rabbi who backs the dovish Labour Party's plan for Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Israeli police said the bullet and a note signed by the shadowy Sicarii group were found in an envelope at the Bnei Brak home of rabbi Moshe Yehoshua Hager on Tuesday.

A Tel Aviv police spokeswoman said the note warned Hager against forcing any Agudat Israel parliamentarians to vote for a government headed by pro-peace Labour leader Shimon Peres. (Reuters)

Special relationship: President George Bush is confident of good relations between the United States and Britain if the opposition Labour Party came to power, the Times newspaper said on Tuesday.

The Times said this was a signal from Bush that the days of deliberate White House hostility to Labour could be over.

Trafficking in women: President Hossein Mohammad Ershad on Tuesday ordered a crackdown on the smuggling of Bangladeshi women and children who are sold abroad as prostitutes and servants.

The official BSS news agency said Ershad issued the order after he visited 15 women and children rescued by police on Monday from a hotel in Dhaka. Police arrested six people who admitted they intended to take the group out of the country.

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Demo inside holy church

Pilgrims amazed

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, April 17. (AP): Palestinian women and masked youths waving outlawed Palestinian flags staged a demonstration today inside the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, venerated as the site of Christ's burial and resurrection.

Visiting pilgrims and tourists stared in amazement as the

Nod to 4 settlements

— Details Page 13 —

40 to 50 demonstrators chanted "P.O. PLO" and "Israel no, Palestine yes" inside what many regard as Christianity's holiest site.

It was the first time that a protest has been staged inside the church since the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation began 28 months ago.

The church is in Jerusalem's Old City, which was captured from Jordanian control in 1967 and is the scene of a dispute between Arab Christians and Jews who last week set up a settlement on church-owned property in the Christian quarter.

Associated Press photographer Max Nash, who witnessed the demonstration, said a Greek Orthodox priest tried to block the demonstrators from entering but they pushed the cleric aside.

Masked youths hung at least one of the outlawed red, white, green and black Palestinian flags from a colonnade inside the church, but priests quickly removed the banner.

Nash said.

Tourists and pilgrims inside the church seemed confused by the demonstration, but one was overheard to say to French: "This is disgusting."

The demonstration started with a sit-in at the nearby Greek Orthodox patriarchate during a visit by Israel's Religious Affairs Minister, Ze'evu Hammer, with Patriarch Diodorus I.

The demonstration appeared to include both young Christian women in jeans and Muslim women in traditional embroidered Palestinian dresses with scarves on their heads.

Foreign journalists and travellers have been barred from entering the area, and few details have emerged of the disturbances. It is likely they were sparked by longstanding tensions between the Muslim ethnic groups of Maronites and the Han Chinese who have been moving into Muslim areas.

Xinjiang officials have warned in recent months that some people in the vast, arid province have been using religion as a guise for separatist, anti-Chinese activities. They have called for tighter controls over religion, which can legally be practised in China only within the framework of government-approved religious bodies.

That announcement came after the arrests in London of several people accused of trying to smuggle nuclear bomb triggers to Iraq. Later, British customs agents impounded Iraq-bound steel tubing in northern England, saying it could be part of a huge gun.

"I ordered the commanders of air and rocket bases, if they ever hear that Israel hits any base or place in Iraq with an atomic bomb, you have to hit Israel because Israel could hit us while we (the leadership) are holding a meeting in Baghdad," Saddam said.

"So you have an advance order to hit back, even in the event they could not have an order from a top commander, if Israel bombs any base or any Iraqi city."

A company run by murdered arms maker Gerald Bull was involved in Iraq's order for steel tubes which British Customs officials say could be used to build a weapon, the firm that made them said yesterday.

Sheffield Forgemasters said Bull's Brussels-based Space Research Corporation acted for the Iraqi Ministry of Trade in sewing up the contract. The Canadian artillery expert was shot dead in a Belgian capital last month, apparently by a professional hit-man.

Bull was well-known to arms circles and had worked for the US and Canadian governments. In 1980 he was jailed for violating a US embargo on arms sales to South Africa by selling it an advanced howitzer.

Sheffield Forgemasters' lawyer Stuart Benson issued a statement yesterday saying, "all documents I have seen support Forgemasters' understanding that the pipes were for a petrochemical application."

It has always been accepted by Forgemasters that Space Research Corp. had involvement in this contract, his statement said. Forgemasters has never sought to conceal such involvement.

The representative of Brussels-based Space Research Corp. in the contract with Iraqi Ministry of Trade had been a Dr. Cowley, not Bull, he added.

Also today, Iraq marked the second anniversary of the recapture of the southern port of Faw on April 17, 1982, which was taken by the Iraqis during the eight-year Gulf war.

The celebrations came amid a barrage of anti-American and anti-British criticism over the two countries' allegations that Iraq could be trying to build a nuclear capability.

Many commentators blamed Iran's capture of Faw in February 1986 on intelligence and satellite information provided by the British and the US governments to Iran.

"Iran was driven by the Westerners and the Zionist advice, which provided it with satellite pictures to facilitate the capture of Faw," said the army daily Al Qadisiya.



Enrile warns

Philippine opposition leader Juan Ponce Enrile, who has urged to emphasise a point during a speech before businessmen on Monday, said the Philippines was talking apart under the rule of President Corason Aquino.

(See also Page 2).



Crested Duck on show
Jon Simons of Sydney looks at a Crested Duck in the poultry pavilion at the Royal Easter Show yesterday. The breed originated in England. Thousands of children visited the agricultural show. (Reuters wirephoto)

Fire at Delhi confab centre

Kashmir parties banned

NEW DELHI, April 17. (Agencies): A fire swept through the Indian government's main conference centre yesterday while 400 senior police and state government officials were attending meetings, police said.

Some 45 fire engines and 250 firefighters fought the blaze for more than six hours after it started at 4 pm. (1030 GMT) at Vigyan Bhawan, or house of knowledge, fire department officials said.

There were no casualties, but the five-storey buildings was badly damaged.

United News of India reported an electrical short circuit may have caused the fire.

But senior police officials refused to rule out possible sabotage or arson. They spoke on condition of not being identified.

Another fire broke out in the Sadar Bazar business neighbourhood of the Indian capital yesterday, police said. There was no reported casualties, but police reported several shops were burned down.

More than 100 senior police officials were attending a conference in Vigyan Bhawan when the fire broke out. They had adjourned their meeting for a tea break when the blaze began.

Another meeting of 300 officials of state governments' information and cinematography departments were also inside the complex when the fire started. They were evacuated.

The centre, with several conference halls and an auditorium, is used for holding large meetings and international conferences.

A Kashmiri separatist group has claimed responsibility for setting the huge fire.

In a telephone call to Reuters in Srinagar, summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, a spokesman for the Mujahideen-e-Kashmir said his group set the blaze at Vigyan Bhawan conference hall.

Delhi police commissioner Vijay Karan said "nothing can be ruled out" when he was asked about possible causes of the fire.

Hunayim Azad, who described himself as chief commander and spokesman of the Mujahideen-e-Kashmir, said the group also set off bombs on a Bombay train, two police stations in New Delhi, and another on a bus in the Indian capital. The bombs killed six people and injured more than 50 last week.

Delhi police have issued warnings to the public to be on the lookout for more bombs as Kashmiri militants expand their campaign against Indian rule beyond the disputed Himalayan region.

Meanwhile, the government ban-

ned eight Muslim militant organisations in Kashmir yesterday and closed two local newspapers in its latest efforts to contain separatist sentiment in the disputed territory.

Press Trust of India news agency said one of the organisations banned was the Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front, which is leading the separatist campaign in Kashmir, held by India.

The step removes constitutional guarantees of civil rights for the organisations and gives police sweeping powers in dealing with them.

The government also closed two newspapers in Srinagar, Kashmir's main town and centre of the separatist campaign.

Poison kills 150

See Page 2

A government statement said the Urdu language newspapers, Aftab and Alsafa, had published objectionable material inciting the passions of the people.

Indian soldiers, meanwhile, confined door-to-door searches for Muslim militants, the 11th consecutive day of an around-the-clock curfew. At least 33 people were taken into custody in Srinagar.

The government imposed the curfew April 6 after three people were kidnapped by Muslim militants demanding secession of the Kashmir valley from India, which is dominated by Hindus.

All three were shot and killed when the government failed to respond to the kidnappers' demands of freedom for three jailed colleagues.

The insurgency in the Kashmir valley has claimed at least 270 lives since the government cracked down on the Muslim movement on Jan 20. Most of the victims have died in confrontations between security forces and the militants.

The independence movement has also escalated tensions between India and Pakistan, which have fought two wars over the valley since both countries gained independence from Britain in 1947.

On Saturday, Prime Minister V.P. Singh said Pakistan was preparing for war by rearing its airfields and moving radar installations and armoured regiments close to the Indian border.

A Pakistani Foreign Ministry official said the statement proved that India was trying to provoke a war.

See Also Page 2

Russia cuts off gas for Vilnius

MOSCOW, April 17. (AP): The Soviet Union said today it cut natural gas supplies to Lithuania under President Mikhail Gorbachev's economic embargo against the Baltic republic's independence drive. Lithuanian media and officials reported.

Lithuania's radio broadcast a telegram from Moscow announcing the cut in gas supplies, the British Broadcasting Corp. reported.

Rita Dapkus, a spokeswoman for the Lithuanian Supreme Council Legislature, confirmed the telegram's text.

"Implementing the orders of the government of the Soviet Union and those of the state gas concern... supplies of natural gas to the Lithuanian Soviet socialist republic will be sharply reduced from the 17th of April," the telegram said.

No official announcement was made in Moscow.

Teresa Juodenienė, a secretary for Premier Kazimiera Prunskienė, said in a telephone interview the Lithuanian government also received a telephone warning from Durbha, or friendship, the state enterprise that supplies oil to Lithuania.

She said Durbha said deliveries of oil and gasoline would be curtailed, on Wednesday.

The telegram announcing the natural gas reduction was sent only to Lithuania's gas authority. Officials did not immediately know whether the cut already had taken effect and what percentage would be reduced.

Gorbachev specifically called for Lithuania to refrain from curtailing the spring draft into the Soviet army and giving residents Lithuanian identity cards. He also said the republic should not seize Communist Party property on Lithuanian territory.

Gorbachev gave the Baltic republic until Sunday night to respond.

Syrians asked to halt Shi'ite battle

BEIRUT, April 17. (Reuters): Terrified Lebanese appealed for Syrian troops to halt vicious street battles between rival Shi'ite Muslims sweeping west Beirut today.

"The gunmen are inside our building firing at each other... please, please, we want the fighting to come now and save us," a woman pleaded on the "Voice of the Homeland" radio station.

But militiamen of the pro-Syrian Amal and pro-Iranian Hezbollah ignored calls from Syrian troops, already deployed in west Beirut and its southern suburbs, to halt the fighting.

Security sources said at least 10 people were killed and 35 wounded in the battles.

(Earlier report Page 13)

China crackdown on religious groups in Muslim areas

BEIJING, April 17. (AP): Officials have been tightening controls over religion in an area of far western China, an official newspaper reported. Muslim ethnic groups have reportedly been noiling in the area.

The Xinjiang daily, mis April 11 edition seen in Beijing today, said officials in the Aksu district of Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region have "gone deep into the grasslands" since February to "eliminate hidden troubles in order to achieve overall stability."

Although the daily made no mention of the reported disturbances, it said the officials have been meeting minority groups "to unite all patriotic

religious persons who could be united and on the other hand firmly crack down on unlawful religious activities."

It said there was poor organisation and improper use of funds in some religious bodies, and that the leadership had decided to strengthen management of local religious organisations.

There reportedly was ethnic rioting earlier this month in Kashgar, about 400 km (250 miles) southwest of Aksu, and Kuqa, a town in the district on the edge of the Taklimakan desert.

Officials both in Urumqi, the provincial capital of Xinjiang, and Beijing have refused to comment on reports that troops were dispatched to the three

cities on April 6 to quell rioting.

Foreign journalists and travellers have been barred from entering the area, and few details have emerged of the disturbances. It is likely they were sparked by longstanding tensions between the Muslim ethnic groups of Manjars and the Han Chinese who have been moving into Muslim areas.

Xinjiang officials have warned in recent months that some people in the vast, arid province have been using religion as a guise for separatist, anti-Chinese activities. They have called for tighter controls over religion, which can legally be practised in China only within the framework of government-approved religious bodies.

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(See also Page 2).

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NICOSIA, April 17. (Reuters): Algeria and Libya have expressed readiness to attend immediate Opec talks to agree on measures that would restore oil prices to its official reference level of \$18 per barrel, a Libyan official said today.

The official told Reuters that Opec President Sadek Boussena of Algeria and Libya Oil Minister Fawzi Shakshouk agreed in urgent telephone consultations that the price slump was caused primarily by excessive production by some Opec members.

"They are willing to attend an immediate meeting of Opec ministers," said the official, reached by telephone from Nicosia.

A joint statement by the two mini-

sters read to Reuters by the official did not identify the countries who were breaking Opec's output quota regulations.

He also declined comment on a meeting scheduled later today of the oil ministers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

"This (price plunge) has caused heavy damage to the economy and interest of the Opec members," the statement said.

Gulf officials told Reuters on Sunday that the three Gulf oil producers were opposed to urgent talks and were more likely to take individual action by cutting their rampant output to prop up prices.

Libya, Algeria ready for Opec price talks

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INTERNATIONAL

India, Pakistan under pressure to halt sabre rattling

ISLAMABAD, April 17, (Reuters): An India-Pakistan war over Kashmir remains a real danger, but both nations are under intense diplomatic pressure to stop sabre rattling and start talking.

Despite a welter of warlike rhetoric, diplomatic channels remain open and Indian and Pakistani officials are talking about a high-level meeting over a Muslim revolt in Indian Kash-

mir. Both foreign ministers, India's Inder Gujral and Pakistan's Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, will be in New York next week for meetings of the United Nations assembly and Non-Aligned Movement.

Foreign Ministry officials in both countries say no meeting has yet been fixed but one is possible. "We want to cool it. Let's hope

that they respond in the same fashion," a senior Pakistani official said today. "We have not responded to the last statement from the Indian prime minister so we hope that should put an end to this cycle of action and reaction."

War fears rose dramatically last week after Indian leader Vishwanath Pratap Singh warned Pakistan in his bluntest terms that it could not expect to

wio Kashmir without a war. US State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler yesterday called for talks and Western diplomats in Islamabad said the Soviet Union was also urging caution on its ally, India.

"We are concerned about the level of tension and we call upon both India and Pakistan to take immediate steps to reduce the tension and to solve the problem of Kashmir through negotia-

tions, not confrontation," Tutwiler said. Both sides have accused the other of making preparations for war and moving men and equipment into forward positions, but diplomats in both capitals say they see no signs of any offensive movements.

"All we are seeing are higher states of readiness, which is only to be expected with the words flying around the way they are,"

a senior Western envoy said in New Delhi. Pakistan Premier Benazir Bhutto displayed her confidence this week by leaving with many senior government figures on a three-day Muslim pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia.

Both India and Pakistan, which have fought three wars since independence in 1947, say they do not want another. Diplomats and analysts see the

biggest danger coming from a border incident that flares into a wider conflagration. India accuses Pakistan of being behind the Muslim revolt in Indian-controlled Kashmir and of training and arming militant gunmen waging a secessionist war on Indian security forces.

Pakistan says its hands are clean, although Benazir has been strident in her political support

for the Kashmiri "freedom fighters." At the moment, analysts say it is hard to see what could be achieved in talks.

Benazir demands that Indian Kashmiris be given a chance to choose whether they want to stay with India, be part of Pakistan or become independent. Singh is equally blunt in saying that Kashmir is part of India and will never be allowed to secede.

Benazir in Jeddah for 3-day visit

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, April 17, (AP): Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto arrived yesterday on a 3-day visit to Makkah, her second out-of-season pilgrimage to Islam's holiest shrines.

Diplomatic sources said Benazir will hold talks with King Fahd. She also met with him during her visit 15 months ago to perform umrah, as the visit to the holy shrines during the season is called. The Hajj, or pilgrimage, culminates during the first days of July this year.

The Saudi monarch is in Makkah for the last third of the current Muslim holy month of fasting, Ramadan.

The sources, who spoke on condition they not be named, said that Benazir's talks with Fahd will cover various issues of common interest, especially the rising tension on the Pakistan-Indian border because of Hindu-Muslim religious strife in the disputed province of Kashmir.

Kashmir is the only Muslim-dominated area in India, and the Saudi-based 46-member Organisation of Islamic Conference has been expressing concern about clashes there. The Saudi-dominated OIC is an umbrella organisation for the Islamic world.

Pakistan already fought two wars with India over Kashmir, some for over 12 million Muslims.

Nothing new to Filipinos
Electricity crisis

MANILA, April 17, (AP): Employees of the Department of Education catnap in darkened corners while their supervisor moves her desk closer to the window to work in the sunlight. Problem: no electricity.

At the main ticketing office of Philippine Airlines, would-be travellers lounge on the stairs waiting until the power returns so airline employees can process their tickets.

Such scenes are repeated daily in this tropical city of 8 million people, who are enduring a grave electricity crisis during the hottest season of the year.

The shortage has reached such a critical stage that the government has announced a limited four-day work week starting next Monday for state offices and buildings that consume more than 100 kilowatts a day.

Infrastructure problems are nothing new to Filipinos, who must cope with a haphazard telephone system, chaotic traffic, potholed streets and an unreliable water system.

Last November, the city went through a similar power crisis, which abated after a failed coup the following month. But with demand increasing in the torrid summer months, the daily "brownouts" are back in full force.

Nothing illustrates the collapse of infrastructure during President Corason Aquino's administration more graphically than the electricity crisis. It is a problem which affects virtually every household.

Power is cut in commercial and residential districts for up to eight hours a day. Perishable food spoils in refrigerators and traffic snarls when stoplights fail.

Without air-conditioning, offices and homes turn to ovens as temperatures hover near 36 degrees Cel-

sus (100 Fahrenheit).

In the city's entertainment district, scantily clad dancers at one club perform their bumps and grinds in the sweltering darkness. The club's generator can power the stereo but not the lights and air-conditioning.

To make matters worse, Manila is also facing a critical water shortage due to a drought on Luzon Island and the antiquated state of the city's sewerage system.

Luis Sison, administrator of the metropolitan waterworks and sewerage system, said 40 per cent of the water is being lost because of leaks in the mains, some of which date back to 1892.

Sison said renovation work began in 1987 but will not be complete until mid-1992, when Aquino's term expires.

Earlier this month, the state-run National Power Corp. acknowledged that 12 of the 22 generating plants on Luzon Island were not operational due to maintenance requirements, storm damage and low water levels at hydroelectric dams.

Those 22 plants generate 2,982 megawatts, of which 80 per cent is consumed in Greater Manila. Deogracias Perilla, vice-president of the power corporation, said plans call for using coal-fired and geothermal plants to provide the foundation of the city's electricity system.

But he said the system will not be fully operational until 1993.

Critics blame the Aquino government for the crisis, which the National Power Corp. had been predicting for the past three years.

High-level panel to monitor violence

India increases surveillance at public places

By Thomas Abraham
Arab Times correspondent

NEW DELHI, April 17: The Indian government has set up a high-level group under the cabinet secretary to monitor the situation arising out of the spurt in terrorist violence in the country.

The home secretary and senior officials of intelligence agencies will be part of the group.

The centre has already sent out instructions to the states to increase surveillance at public places like railway stations, bus depots, airports, cinema halls and markets — all potential targets for terrorists planning bomb blasts.

While the Doodar Express was on its journey from Gauhati to Kathbar, a bomb exploded under the moving train, resulting in the derailment of one coach. One person died and ten suffered injuries, five of them seriously.

A few hours later, a bomb exploded under the Avadh-Allahabad Express, derailling eight coaches. As many as 13 passengers died and 65 others were injured, 21 of them grievously.

What is disquieting about the two accidents is that they occurred on the two arterial routes on the broad gauge and metre gauge sections of the North-East Frontier Railway, on which depend the movement of essential commodities to the entire north-east region.

Railway Minister George Fernandes told the Lok Sabha yesterday that it was quite clear that there was a "diabolical design" to destabilise the entire region when it is realised that on the same night, the vital road bridge across the River Manas on the national highway, not far from one of the rail accident sites, was also blown up. This has disrupted road communication to the north-east. "The situation is indeed very grim," Fernandes said.

Track patrolling has been intensified in the region with the help of the Assam Rifles, a paramilitary force. Motor trollies have been provided to facilitate the movement of police officials for surprise checks and general supervision. Pilot engines with police escorts will run on the sensitive sections early morning every day, Fernandes said.

For the present, running of passenger trains through the disturbed area is being restricted to daylight hours only.

In Delhi, the blast in a bus comes close on the heels of two explosions in police stations and Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed has said the devices used in all three cases appeared to be similar. Six people died in the blast and 51 others were injured. A general alert has been sounded throughout Delhi and a special surveillance is being maintained at public places.

At a meeting with directors general of police of all the states here Monday, Sayeed said the government was evolving a multi-level response to meet the challenges thrown up by secessionists and extremists.

In the Lok Sabha, Sayeed claimed the continuous curfew for several days in Srinagar and elsewhere in the Kashmir Valley had enabled the administration to conduct house-to-house searches and flush out many hardcore militants. Any relaxation in curfew would help the militants to move from one place to another, he said. The Mufti claimed a breakthrough in Kashmir in the drive against terrorists and said there would be no let up in the efforts to track down more of them.

Father's revenge
Knifed for puff offer

NAPLES, April 17, (Reuters): A Naples neighbourhood Mafia boss whose 10-year-old son was given a cigarette ordered a revenge killing against the boy who offered it, police said.

Luigi Ippoliti, 13, was knifed in the back by two youths after he gave the boss's son a puff of his cigarette last night, police said.

"Don't you know that smoking is bad for you?" Ippoliti said the youths told him just before winking their knives.



Food poisoning toll 150

At least 150 people died from food poisoning at a celebration in northern India, a news agency reported yesterday. Hundreds of people were hospitalised after a feast to celebrate a marriage engagement on Sunday in Rajpura, a town near Lucknow, capital of the Uttar Pradesh state. At least 80 people pronounced dead on Monday and 70 died yesterday, Press Trust of India reported.

Hospital spokesmen said a specific death toll could not be established because victims were taken to several

hospitals. One government health official said he expected more deaths. According to a preliminary investigation, a poisonous phosphorus compound apparently contaminated the food used for making puri, a fried bread, and caused the deaths. Pictures show relatives try to comfort a lady whose two children died from food poisoning in Gujarat (Reuters wirephoto).

87 reported killed

Train crash

NEW DELHI, April 17, (AP): A leaking gas cylinder exploded in a moving passenger train yesterday in eastern India, sparking a raging fire that killed at least 37 people and wounded 65, according to authorities and news reports.

Local reporters said 100 people died in the blaze, while United News of India quoted local officials as saying at least 87 people died.

The train was passing through Kumharhar near Patna, the capital of Bihar state. Patna is 800 kms (500 miles) southeast of New Delhi.

Firefighters extinguished the blaze, which broke out at 9:30 a.m. (0400 GMT) and swept through two cars of the 16-car train, a local official reported. "The heat was so intense no one dared to enter the train for at least a half-hour after the fire," said district magistrate S.K. Sharma, the top civil administrator in the Patna region.

Gunmen kill 3 in Karachi

KARACHI, Pakistan, April 17, (Reuters): Gunmen killed three people including two policemen, rising to 25 the number who have died in Karachi violence in 11 days, police said today.

Head constable Shahbaz Khan's bullet-riddled body was found in Karachi west and constable Masood Qureshi was found shot in the central area of the city yesterday.

Police had no motive for the officers' deaths, but said a shopkeeper was killed when he intervened in a quarrel.

Two bombs exploded in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi this morning but there was no human loss.

Dutch scientist makes Aids breakthrough

AMSTERDAM, April 16, (Reuters): A Dutch scientist says his research team has made "dramatic" progress in laboratory tests on blocking the Aids virus from reproducing in the body of an infected person.

Jaap Goudsmit, professor of virology at the Amsterdam Academic Medical Centre, stuck to his claim of a breakthrough, despite sceptical local reaction after national newspapers carried headlines like "Netherlands experts discover Aids medicine" and "new control for Aids."

"I think we have advanced dramatically," he said. "That doesn't change. It's just that int he Dutch press

they made a medicine or drug out of it and it's not a drug. It's the design. The design, maybe, for future drugs," he told Reuters on Sunday evening by telephone from his home.

Goudsmit and organic chemistry professor Henk Bont of Eindhoven University said last Thursday that they had discovered in test-tube trials a way of using modified DNA (the genetic material in cells) to prevent the HIV virus from reproducing and spreading through the human body.

The announcement came on the eve of publication of their findings in the US journal science.

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Garbo to be cremated

Secrecy surrounded funeral arrangements yesterday for Greta Garbo, just the way it surrounded her life. But Swedish diplomatic sources in Washington said they believe her remains would be flown home to her native Sweden.

A spokesman for the New York City medical examiner said Garbo's relatives had sought and received permission to have her body cremated.

But details of the funeral arrangements and the cremation remained secret, befitting a woman who spent the last decades of her life shunning all publicity and living as anonymously as she could in New York, a city that prides itself on minding its own business.

SAS, the Scandinavian airline, said it knew of no arrangements to fly her remains home but a spokesman said the arrangements could be made privately to avoid publicity.

Garbo died on Sunday at New York hospital at age 84. The hospital declined to give a cause of death but confirmed that she had been under treatment for kidney problems.

Picture above shows a Garbo fan, John Wallowich carrying a portrait of the late actress, sitting outside her apartment on April 16. (Reuters wirephoto)

PEOPLE AND PLACES

RANCHO MIRAGE, California: A painting by Frank Sinatra sold for \$17,000 at a celebrity art auction to benefit a treatment centre founded by the singer's wife for sexually abused children.

The abstract floral painting was bought Saturday by Boh Ross, an executive with Toys R Us, a toy operation, said Susan Reynolds, a spokeswoman for Sinatra.

More than \$140,000 was raised for the Barbara Sinatra Children's Centre at Eisenhower Medical Centre. Mrs Sinatra founded the children's centre four years ago.

Celebrities attending the event at the Ritz Carlton Hotel included the Sinatras, Gregory Peck, Roger Moore, Don Rickles and Betty Ford. (AP)

BISMARCK, North Dakota: Two hospital orderlies are hiring themselves out as dates for high school girls without partners on prom night.

The two Medcenter One hospital workers are asking \$100 a date. For the price, Yancy or Mike will rent a tuxedo, pick up the girl, meet her parents, present her with a corsage, take her to dinner and go to the dance.

"We're not looking for a profit," said 21-year-old Mike. He and Yancy spoke to the Bismarck Tribune on condition that their last names not be used to save a girl's friends from finding out she is with a rent-a-date.

"It seems like all the high school guys want to ask out the same beautiful girl," said Yancy, 19.

Yancy said he attended four proms during his high school days and Mike three. They both said they knew how to show a girl a good time.

"We'll treat the girls nice, just like if we asked them out ourselves," Mike said.

Yancy, a pre-ouring student, says his parents think the idea is great. Even his girlfriend has endorsed it. (AP)

WELLESLEY, Massachusetts: Students at Wellesley college are protesting the selection of Barbara Bush as their Commencement speaker, saying the First Lady has not earned the honour on her own.

"To honour Barbara Bush as a Commencement speaker is to honour a woman who has gained

recognition through the achievements of her husband, which contradicts what we have been taught over our years at Wellesley," said a petition signed by 150 students and presented to college president Naseri Keohane.

Anna Perez, a spokeswoman for Mrs Bush in Washington, said Sunday the First Lady had no comment on the petition. Mrs Bush accepted an invitation to speak at Commencement June 1 at the 2,200-student women's college.

Laura Staris, a Wellesley spokeswoman, defended the invitation. (AP)

CHEYENNE, Wyoming: A deteriorated revolver has been unearthed by construction crews tearing up the main street through Cheyenne's historic downtown, raising hopes that a bit of the old US Wild West has turned up.

Experts at the state museum refuse to speculate the exact age of the corroded pistol until a study is completed. But judging from the location in which it was found, it could be more than a century old.

"I wouldn't want to imagine for a minute that it was the result of an old gunfight on main street. But all things are possible," said Steve Cotherman, manager of the Wyoming state museum.

The revolver was uncovered Friday at a level lower than hurried street tracks, which were built in the 1890s. Normally, an object found on a lower level is older, Cotherman said. (AP)

WOODWARD, Oklahoma: A wayward out from a candy bar may someday bear fruit for Loree Arnold.

The almond tree in her back yard apparently began as a out in her grandson's candy bar, she said.

She recalled that she first noticed a weed growing in a planter by the front door about five years ago. When she pulled it, she discovered an almond-like seed attached to the roots.

"It kind of shocked me," she said. "I poked my finger down in the hole and replanted it to see what it would do."

She said their grandson, Rocky Arnold, then 9, heard his grandparents discussing the "weed" and confessed. (AP)

Mission to Mars too risky

Joint exploration should continue, say experts

WASHINGTON, April 17, (AP) Joint missions to Mars by the United States and the Soviet Union are too risky now, but independent co-ordinated exploration should continue, a panel said yesterday.

"The United States and USSR have no prior experience with the degree of co-operation necessary to carry out a technical project of this complexity or magnitude," said a committee of the National Research Council.

The committee said it was concerned "about relying on the consistency of the relationship over a period of a decade or more into the future."

With its report, the panel chilled the idea frequently expressed by many experts that Mars would be explored jointly by the Soviets and Americans, thus doing together what would be too expensive for either nation to do alone.

The US and the Soviets have co-operated in space in the past, most notably in 1975 when three astronauts aboard an Apollo spacecraft joined their ship with a Soviet Soyuz and exchanged bear hugs in orbit with its two cosmonauts.

The NRC committee was asked by NASA to look into undertaking missions with international partners to gather rocks and soil from Mars, using robots, and returning them to earth for analysis. The committee concentrated its study on efforts by the US and USSR because they are the only nations in a position to take on the lead role in a Mars programme.

The Soviets have said they intend to explore Mars with robotic rovers, space probes orbiting overhead and by returning samples. A scenario often mentioned is that one nation would build a lander and a sample-return vehicle while the other would

develop a roving vehicle for collecting samples and analysing them.

Detailed Mars investigations would include robotic missions at four to six selected sites over a number of years. The committee said its recommended approach "would allow a graceful path to increasingly close levels of co-operation."

The committee said it considered three levels of US participation with the Soviets in a Mars venture, reaching these conclusions:

In the case of each country conducting programmes independently, the panel concluded that the cost would be too high, the returns would be less than maximum, US technology would benefit greatly and there would be no additional risk of transferring technology to the Soviets.

In addition, the committee said it would make no contribution to US-Soviet experience in technical and social endeavours and "it could also

ignite a space competition similar to the race to the moon."

If both nations were to undertake separate responsibilities on a joint project, it "would have a greater, presumably positive impact on US-Soviet relations than would options involving lesser degrees of interactions and reliance," the committee said.

Such a venture would allow the nations to share costs while increasing returns and take advantage of the best of both nations' space programmes, such as the Soviets' lead in heavy-lift launch capability.

Although there is a danger that the co-operation could "deteriorate into a race for Mars," the committee said, if the schedule is planned and paced properly, the competition might even be helpful.

The report also urged the United States to re-establish its leadership in some aspects of space science.

Raises fears

Serial killer

NEW YORK, April 17, (AP) The killings of five taxi drivers in the Bronx, including three by a suspected serial killer, have terrorized hundreds of drivers who are sacrificing profits for daytime driving.

The latest killing on Saturday and another three days earlier were dismissed by police as unrelated to the first three, but they heightened fears in an area where cab drivers have not felt safe for decades.

Officer James Terretta, assisting a special task force of about 30 police officers assigned to investigate the homicides, said police do not have a suspect yet in any of the killings but are receiving tips from the public.

Mayor David Dinkins has offered a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the killer or killers of the drivers.

The terror spree began on March 7 with the death of Acton Jones, 37, in the Wakefield section. On March 14, Elliot Whitaker, 43, was killed in Williamsbridge, and on April 9, Paul Burghard, 25, died in the Eastchester section.

In each of the shootings, a man phoned a car service requesting a cab and then killed the drivers with a shot to the head from a .22-calibre gun and robbed them.

Last Wednesday, unlicensed taxi driver Dennis Forbes, 41, was shot in the head and killed in Tremont section before he had a chance to use a .25-calibre handgun police said he kept on the seat next to him.

Late Saturday, Rafael Montes de Oca, 38, of the Seaman Car Service was shot in the head and killed in the Fordham section after he went to pick up a regular customer.

The first three are connected and last two are not," said officer Ralph St. Just, a police spokesman.

Orient Express to make historic London-Istanbul train journey in May

NEW YORK, April 17, (UPI) Goodwood Travel said yesterday it will resume next month for one journey only the famous London to Istanbul railroad service aboard Europe's historic train, the Orient Express.

"For more than a hundred years the Orient Express has symbolized the ultimate in luxury train travel," said Goodwood Travel, a tour operator based in Canterbury, Britain. "It was made famous by its illustrious clientele, which included members of European royalty, diplomats, notorious spies and femmes fatales, immortalised by the film industry."

The Orient Express, Europe's most famous railroad service started in the late 19th century, was discontinued after World War II, financially unable to withstand the competition from airlines and faster and cheaper trains.

Goodwood Travel said 100 fortunate and presumably wealthy travellers will be able to board the Orient Express' original pullman cars at London's Victoria station May 30 for an Istanbul-bound journey of four days and five nights.

The Pullman cars, which belonged to France's Compagnie des Wagons-Lits, were discarded after

the service was discontinued. The cars were saved from destruction and restored by two investors, Albert Glatt and James Sherwood, and are now used for leisure trips on the Nostalgic Istanbul Orient-Express and the Venice Simplon Orient-Express Lines.

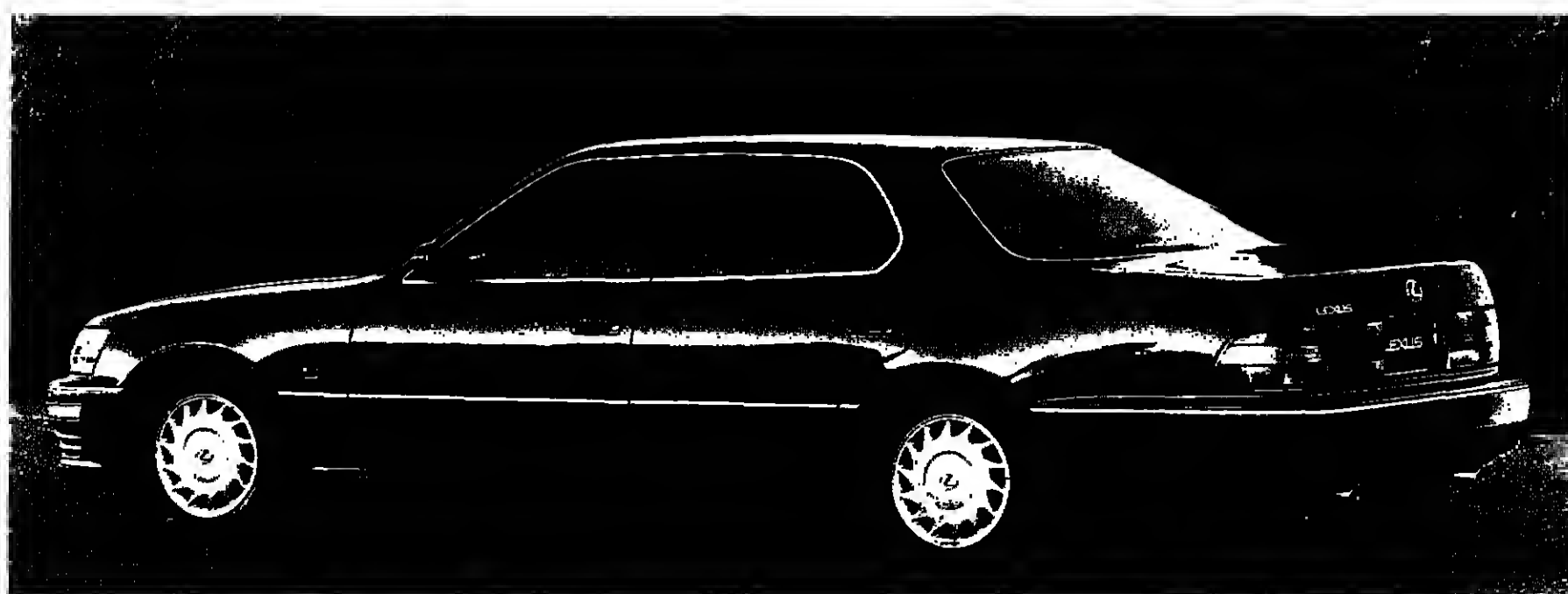
The "Stamboul Train" will take travellers across the English Channel to France, and continue through West Germany, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria to Istanbul.

"In keeping with the occasion, there will be welcome receptions, gala dinners and banquets in

palaces, a private performance of the famous Vienna Boys' Choir, sightseeing and the ultimate VIP service throughout," the tour operator said.

Stops are scheduled in Salzburg, Austria, the Hungarian capital of Budapest and Sofia, Bulgaria.

Among the scheduled extravaganzas are a band and red-carpet farewell in London, fireworks along the road, a pianist playing famed tunes of the 1920s aboard the train, visits to historic places in horse-drawn carriages, a cruise down the Danube river, as well as dancing and champagne in the bar salon, restored to its original paneled splendour."



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INTERNATIONAL

Boatlift brought chaos to Miami

MIAMI, April 17. (AP): When reporter Maria Montoya first visited Key West, Florida, it was just after midnight on May 1, 1980 and the boatlift of refugees from Mariel, Cuba, was in full swing. But Montoya was on the other side of the cameras.

A US Coast Guard ship had rescued her, her husband Eduardo, and 10 other people crowded into a disabled 18-foot (6-metre) boat adrift in the Gulf stream after completing most of the 90-mile (150-kilometre) journey from Cuba.

The boatlift was 10 days old, and Montoya and her husband got a warm reception. They were cheered as they stepped onto US territory, and welcomed by US soldiers and volunteer workers who gave them food and clothing.

One sight seemed strange, though.

"I saw 300 men, their heads almost shaved, sitting on the dock," she said. "I asked why are those men sitting apart? Someone told me, 'those are the criminals and the mental patients Castro is sending us'."

The boatlift then was being hailed as "the freedom flotilla," an embarrassment to Fidel Castro's rule and a chance, as then-US president Jimmy Carter said, to welcome "with open arms" those fleeing oppression.

But before it ended five months later, when Castro closed the port of Mariel, it had become a disaster, costing hundreds of millions of dollars, stirring murderous crime waves and escalating prejudices.

Misfits

"The whole Mariel boatlift struck very deep, nasty chords in the American public," said Frank Sharry, executive director of the immigration policy group, the national forum.

"Marielito" became a derisive label meaning misfits, crazies, hard-core criminals.

"But you know what? Most of them did just fine," Sharry said.

Ms Montoya, now 33, who risked a comfortable life as a Cuban radio and TV actress, is among dozens of marielitos who have achieved success in the United States. They have made their mark in television, business, education and sports, and several boatlift children have become honour students.

Nonetheless, the stigma remains.

Even after the initial crime waves blamed on Mariel refugees subsided, their image was furthered by such cases as the 1984 slaying of a Miami beach police officer, 1987 riots and hostage-taking by refugees in two federal prisons; and the fire that claimed 87 lives last month as a New York City social club, in which a Mariel refugee is charged.

Hesitates

Unlike many of the refugees, Montoya, who recently returned to Key West to film a report for Spanish-language television on the boatlift's 10th anniversary, never hesitates to tell her story.

"Bad people came, and a lot of good people came," she said. "I held back a lot, when people were talking about how bad the Mariel people were. People would say to me, 'Oh, you don't look like a Mariel person.' That bothered me. There was a stereotype, and I am an individual."

Nearly a month before her arrival, Montoya and her husband had dashed into the Peruvian embassy in Havana, joining a confused and desperate throng that finally totalled 10,800 people.

"I think Castro never expected that many people wanted to leave. When he saw that, he wanted to spoil their image," Montoya said.

US Sen. Bob Graham, then the governor of Florida, recalls attending a Washington luncheon in April 1980 and being told by State Department officials of the embassy incident.

Within weeks, a distant foreign policy question became a crisis for Florida as Castro abruptly announced the opening of the port at Mariel, Cuba.

A rag-tag armada of boats chartered by Cuban-Americans anxious to pick up relatives set sail and returned with some surprising cargo.

Along with parents, aunts and uncles, friends and former political prisoners, the boats brought passengers picked by the Cuban government.

Castro and the state-controlled media crowed that the United States was getting "the huns and scum."

"We don't want them," Castro told a cheering Havana crowd. "We don't need them."

By throwing in Cuban miscreants, Castro portrayed the boatlift as a sweeping out of his society.

Unleashed on American society from Spartan Cuban Gullags, the boatlift's criminal element spurred street crime explosions in Miami's little Havana and among the elderly of Miami beach, then spread into other US cities.

Their crimes were the worst of many problems.

"It had a human impact by adding 125,000 people to the population," reflected Graham. "It contributed to a tense community situation."



Ortega being blessed by Puerto Rican evangelist Jorge Raschke (left), during a religious service on April 16. (Reuter wirephoto)

We're facing risk: Ortega

Contras could derail inauguration plans

MANAGUA, April 17. (AP): President Daniel Ortega said the rebels' refusal to demobilise could derail next week's inauguration of Violeta Chamorro.

"We are facing a real risk that we may get to April 25 and the peaceful transition of power that we all have sought will not take place," Ortega said yesterday.

Ortega, a leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, was defeated by Chamorro in presidential elections last February. He has repeatedly said the reluctance of the rebels, known as Contras, to lay

down their US-supplied arms could be an obstacle to a smooth transition of government on April 25.

Representatives of the rebels signed an accord last month with members of Chamorro's US-backed opposition coalition — the United National Opposition — in which they promised to disarm.

But many rebels in the field, and their combat-hardened commander, Israel Galeano, have said they do not trust the Sandinistas and have vowed to continue fighting until there is true democracy in Nicaragua.

'Time is wasting': US officials

\$800m Centam aid plea



A Contra rebel keeps an eye out for Sandinista troops near La Esperanza, some 120 miles northeast of Managua April 11 (Reuter wirephoto)

WASHINGTON, April 17. (AP): The United States is pressuring Congress to enact an \$800-million aid package for Central America, calling further delay an affront to allies in the region.

Administration officials say that stalling the aid package beyond the April 25 inauguration of US-backed Nicaraguan President-elect Violeta Chamorro would be a foreign policy embarrassment.

It also would be a burden on the government of Honduras, a longtime US ally, the officials say. Many of the rebels, known as Contras, the United States hopes to resettle remain in camps in Honduras.

President George Bush is meeting today with Honduran President Rafael L. Callejas to discuss the Contra resettlement problem and other Central American issues.

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, who lost to Mrs Chamorro in the recent elections, yesterday complained of continued attacks by Contra rebels. Ortega's Sandinista government has said the Contras must demobilise before Chamorro's inauguration, and Chamorro joined the call for disarmament.

Also on the agenda at the Bush-Callejas meeting was the status of efforts by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United States and Japan to help Honduras ease its large international debt.

Addressing a White House audience on Latin American issues yesterday Bush said Congress — which returns from a recess tomorrow — was wrong not to provide the funds before the break.

Cartel denounces leader

Escobar's position may be in danger

BOGOTA, April 17. (AP): The Medellin drug cartel has disavowed alleged leader Pablo Escobar for insisting on bloody attacks against the government and fellow cocaine traffickers.

The administration of President Virgilio Barco allowed extradition last August. Since then the cartel has used a combination of terrorism and offers of peace to try to convince the government to abandon the policy.

The country's largest newspaper, El Tiempo, suggested the document might be a hoax because the lettering and format were different from previous cartel communications.

The document, sent by facsimile late Sunday to local media, said that Escobar no longer represented the cartel. The traffickers denounced the reputed drug baron for his use of indiscriminate violence.

The communique was signed by the Extraditables, a name used by cartel leaders to refer to

the government's plan to extradite them to the United States for trial.

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The communique was signed by the Extraditables, a name used by cartel leaders to refer to

they declared a unilateral truce in January. Last month a communique signed by the Extraditables said they were renewing the terrorist campaign because the government had refused to negotiate with traffickers.

How to deal with Colombia's violent and powerful drug lords is certain to be the most hotly-debated issue in campaigning for May 27 presidential elections, which begins in earnest this week.

The drug-traffickers' bloody trail of bombings and murders has had a strong impact on the campaign, which will largely be fought on television screens where the candidates are safe from assassins' guns.

Two candidates have already been shot to death by assassins believed to be in the pay of the drug barons.

Llosa affirms presidential candidacy

Fujimori taken ill, unable to announce platform

LIMA, April 17. (Reuter): Novelist Mario Vargas Llosa said yesterday he would contest the final round of Peru's presidential election, ending speculation that he would quit in the face of mounting support for his opponent Alberto Fujimori.

"I will go to the second round struggling for the reforms our country needs," Vargas Llosa, a centre-rightist, said in a statement.

The local press had reported that Vargas Llosa was despondent and thinking of dropping out after Fujimori surprised the nation by coming within four percentage points of beating Vargas Llosa in the first round on April 8.

Support for Fujimori is spreading and most political analysts say the son of Japanese immigrants is the favourite to win the final round of elections on May 27 or June 3.

But as Vargas Llosa lifted the doubts about his candidacy, Fujimori abruptly cancelled a press

conference called to announce his political platform.

His wife, Susana, told the journalists her husband had become sick after eating a contaminated codfish, causing him to break out over his face.

"My husband will not be able to attend... he is suffering from severe food intoxication," she said.

There was no suggestion, however, that the illness would affect Fujimori's candidature.

Fujimori, a mild-mannered former university rector, had been scheduled to announce his long-awaited electoral platform at the news conference.

Though he was the only one of nine candidates in the first round of elections who did not issue a pro-business centrist.

Vargas Llosa said he had been ready to quit his candidacy "to spare Peru the difficulties and delays of a second round in this moment of grave national

crisis."

But he said he would stay in the race so as not to "defraud the millions of compatriots who voted for us" and because the constitution required it. He declined to speak to reporters after issuing the statement.

Whoever wins the presidency will lead a country drained by leftist guerrilla violence in which over 17,000 people have died and by inflation of 30 per cent a month.

Leftist leaders have supported Fujimori as a way of blocking Vargas Llosa from reaching power, saying his plans to slash inflation and put the government's finances in order would throw millions of Peruvians out of work.

His withdrawal could have sparked a serious constitutional crisis, political analysts said, with experts divided on whether it would be legal for him to step down after winning the first round.

European ire at US attitude

Greenhouse effect meet

WASHINGTON, April 17. (Agencies): The White House conference on global climate change began on a discordant note yesterday as European delegates accused the Bush administration of trying to shift discussion of possible international action to reduce "greenhouse" emissions.

The conference opened last night with a reception for delegates at the National Air and Space Museum, and President Bush was scheduled to make welcoming remarks to delegates from 17 countries this morning.

However, Dutch delegates jumped the gun with a news conference where they expressed irritation at the administration's "one-way traffic conference."

The Dutch charged the White House had tailored the agenda to fit the administration's position that more scientific research is needed before the international community can agree on economically costly steps to reduce industrial carbon dioxide emissions linked to global warming.

"We were quite surprised with the agenda," said Pier Vellinga, director of the Netherlands' national climate programme.

"We now see the United States is organising this conference to stress the difficulties in economics of reducing carbon dioxide emissions and stating not enough research is done."

Letters

"We are not very happy about this conference focusing on research," he said. "We should jointly discuss policy implications."

"It is not a cost-benefit issue. It is an issue of political will. We are a little bit worried about this conference, that it is not focusing on political will but on economic agenda," he said.

Vellinga said his country and others wrote letters to the White House asking to change the agenda to include public discussion of possible international action to freeze or reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of oil, coal and other fossil fuels.

"We have had no reply," he said. "We do now see that it's a kind of one-way traffic conference."

Vellinga said other European delegates shared his country's concerns about the conference, but that it was too late to change the agenda.

"I think we'll just settle for this conference and try to reduce the damage," he said.

Vellinga also said the Europeans were "annoyed" that the Bush administration had given European officials virtually no opportunity to make public remarks at the conference sessions that were open to the media.

Annoyed

He said only one foreign delegate, a Polish official, was scheduled to speak at open sessions and that other European officials would have to content themselves with remarks at closed workshops.

"There is no opportunity for senior politicians to speak," Vellinga said. "This we find a bit annoying."

"We think (global warming) is very much a thing that deals with the general public and with politics," he said. "It's not very helpful if a head of delegation can only make comments in a closed workshop."

Vellinga also disputed remarks last week by Allen Bromley, chief science adviser to President Bush, that there still were too many scientific and economic uncertainties to warrant international action to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

In view of those data gaps, Bromley said the administration would use the conference to call for expanded international research on global warming.

Uncertain

Vellinga said US officials had greatly exaggerated the scientific uncertainties of global warming as well as the economic costs of reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

"You can reduce carbon dioxide and still have a prosperous economy like we have now," he said. "It's just a matter of restructuring your economy so you are less wasteful of energy."



Obscenity trial

The Contemporary Arts Centre in Cincinnati and its director ordered on Monday to stand trial on obscenity charges for exhibiting works by the late homosexual photographer Robert Mapplethorpe.

Lawyers for the Cincinnati museum and its director, Dennis Barrie, entered not-guilty pleas to the charges in an appearance before a state court assigned commissioner. A trial was set for April 30.

The works of Mapplethorpe, who died of Aids in March 1989, have been embroiled in controversy because they include photographs with homosexual themes, as well as pictures of nude children.

The show had been scheduled to open last summer at the Cincinnati gallery in Washington but was cancelled after it came under attack by members of Congress, most notably conservative Senator Jesse Helms, Republican of North Carolina.

The show, titled "Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment," has been exhibited without controversy in Chicago and other cities. It was arranged by the Institute of Contemporary Art of the University of Pennsylvania.

In the picture: Lisa Stagman (right) of Voice against Censorship in Cincinnati, chants with protestors. (Reuter wirephoto)

Talk to plants

US gardener urges

NEW YORK, April 17. (Reuter): Former policeman Jerry Baker says he has better things to do with beer than drink it — he feeds it to his plants.

Baker, who was in town earlier this month promoting his 41st book, "Jerry Baker's Flowering Garden," offered the following menu for all garden plants: One cup of beer, one cup of children's shampoo, ammonia, corn syrup, and 80 litres (17 gallons) of water.

"You spray that on them and the plant will chase you back to the house and ask you when the next party is," he said.

"Plants are like people," said the best-selling author. "If it's good enough for you, it's good enough for them."

Baker is full of such tips and at a recent lunch he rattled them off in the mile-a-minute style that has made his nationally syndicated gardening radio show a success and brings him continued offers to host a national television show on gardening.

"I use the kiss method," he boasted. "Keep it simple, stupid."

"There are plenty of magic notions, potions, and lotions, but the best gardening method is common sense," he said.

Baker said he is impervious to TV offers, preferring to concentrate on his call-in radio show, his twice-a-year gardening piece for Sports Illustrated, and his self-produced monthly newsletter with a circulation of more than 100,000.

His books have such titles as "The Impatient Gardener," "Talk to Your Plants" and "Jerry Baker's Fast Easy Vegetable Garden."

Baker said his charmed garden life is all a hoe's throw from his former career as an undercover narcotics and vice cop in Detroit, where his cover more often than not was as a gardener.

He was known in Detroit's garden district by the green derby he wore. "I planted more hogs in the '50s than most people would think of killing," he said.

Baker gave up his police job after a prostitute recognised him on the street from a local gardening show he had done.

Now, the man who says he learned all the gardening he knows from his American Indian grandmother, attends conventions and gardening shows for ten months a year.

He said his material is so successful that a comedian at a New York nightclub once asked if he could borrow some of his jokes for his own act.

Baker said that his quick success led to a partial breakdown in 1983 when he collapsed from exhaustion and alcoholism. At 59, he's still a workaholic who sleeps only three hours a night, but he no longer drinks and said he tries to eat properly.

In July and August, his only months off, Baker tinkers with his own garden in Troy, Michigan.

Blaze blacks California forest

VENTURA, California, April 17. (AP): Light rain helped firefighters battling a 600-acre (242-hectare) blaze yesterday in the Los Padres National Forest that apparently was started by an abandoned campfire, authorities said.

Firefighters had contained 85 per cent of the blaze, said Earl Clayton of the US Forest Service. They expected to have it fully controlled by this evening, he added.

No buildings were damaged. About 280 firefighters were on the fire line yesterday in the area 25 miles (40 kilometres) northeast of Ventura.

The blaze broke out Friday in 4,000-foot (1,219-metre) terrain so steep that bulldozers and engines couldn't be used. Crews were ferried in by helicopter.



Llosa waves to supporters

Passengers abandoned

Star captain left blazing ferry while others awaited rescue

COPENHAGEN, Denmark, April 17. (AP) The chief officer of the Scandinavian Star admitted to a marine inquiry yesterday that he and other officers abandoned the blazing ferry while passengers awaited rescue.

Police in Oslo, Norway, estimated the number of dead in the April 7 fire at 161, but said the figure was not final because it was uncertain how many passengers boarded the ferry. The Danish-owned vessel was on an overnight run from Oslo to Frederikshavn, Denmark.

Chief officer Oddvar Finstad, the third-in-command, said he and the Norwegian master of the Scandinavian Star, Capt. Hugo Larsen, and other officers left the burning vessel in a lifeboat, knowing that a group of passengers remained in the bow deck.

The fate of the abandoned passengers,

some of whom were rescued later, was not discussed as they roared away in the last usable lifeboat, Finstad said.

"I can't see what more I could have done on board after the captain left the ship," he said. Larsen and other officers returned three hours later to help Swedish and Norwegian firefighters.

Finstad's testimony on the sixth day of the inquiry into the disaster supported accounts by rescued passengers that the crew appeared confused and ill-trained to deal with an emergency.

Under close questioning, Finstad acknowledged that he knew practically nothing about the ship's emergency plan or evacuation procedures.

The officer said he was unaware of his assignment in the posted emergency plan as

head of the emergency plan as head of the ship's 14-man fire squad and was unable to identify the other squad members.

The inquiry established that the required fire and evacuation drills were not held. Finstad appeared at a loss to answer questions about why the safety procedures were not checked before the 20-year old ferry was allowed to sail with passengers.

Most of the predominantly Portuguese and Filipino crew had signed on the Scandinavian Star only five days before the fatal fire, which police believe was set.

The ship's safety officer, first officer Sverre Aashildro, testified that he knew nothing about the international Solas safety regulations that require fire drills when more than 25 per cent of the crew is new.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Africa

Third of NY hookers carry Aids: One out of three prostitutes in New York is carrying the Aids virus, according to results of a new study published on Monday.

The results are preliminary, but if confirmed by formal review they would reflect one of the highest rates of Aids infection ever found among prostitutes in the United States.

The nine-month study, by Dr Joyce Wallace, a Manhattan physician with a large acquired immune deficiency syndrome practice, tested some 950 street-walkers. (Reuters)

Author Marquez suit dismissed: A Los Angeles federal judge dismissed a lawsuit Monday against Nobel prize-winning author Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who was accused of violating a contract to make a movie from his novel, "Love in the Time of Cholera."

US District Judge Manuel Real threw out the case after apparently finding the Colombian author had never entered an enforceable contract with producer Richard Roth to make a movie based on the best-selling book, lawyers said.

On Dec 16, Roth sued Marquez and his literary agent in Spain, accusing them of interfering with the producer's contract to make the movie by demanding that a "Latin American director" handle the project. (UPI)

Pleads no contest in bomb case: A woman whose 1988 arrest on charges she tried to kill the head of a medical company galvanised the animal rights movement pleaded no contest Monday in Stamford, Connecticut in exchange for a reduced one-year sentence.

Fran Trutt, 33, was arrested in November 1988 after a remote-controlled pipe bomb was found near the parking space of Leon Hirsch, chairman of US Surgical Corp. in Norwalk.

Trutt had scuttled another plea agreement. But on Monday she pleaded no contest to attempted murder, possession of explosives and bomb manufacturing, said her attorney, John Williams. (AP)

Exxon skipper appeals verdict: The dismissed skipper of the Exxon Valdez, the supertanker that caused the worst oil spill in US history, has appealed against his conviction for negligence.

In his appeal, filed late on Friday, in Anchorage, Alaska, Joseph Hazelwood said the state of Alaska was wrong to charge him with any criminal offences in connection with the spill from the grounded ship.

Hazelwood cited the state's oil-spill immunity clause — granting spillers who report their environmental accidents protection from any criminal prosecution. (Reuters)

Women likely to die from bypasses: Women are more likely than men to die from coronary bypass surgery than men because women are sicker when they have the operation, a new study in Washington said.

Dr Steven Khan of the University of California in Los Angeles' School of Medicine studied 2,297 male and female bypass patients. Their findings are reported in today's "Annals of Internal Medicine."

The death rate from bypass surgery was 77 per cent greater for women than for men — 4.6 per cent vs 2.6 per cent, Khan says. That is similar to what previous studies have found. (Kuna)

National Geographic editor sued: The editor of National Geographic magazine, which for more than 100 years has explored the world and the creatures that inhabit it, was replaced suddenly Monday. Neither he nor the society that publishes the magazine was saying whether he was fired.

"I just don't know the circumstances well enough to deal with it," said Wilbur E. Garrett, 59, who had been editor since 1980.

Garrett was replaced by William T.E. Graves, 63, who had been a senior member of the magazine's editorial staff for 12 years.

Graves became the eighth editor in the 103-year history of the publication. The magazine is sent to the 10 million members of the National Geographic Society. (AP)

San Antonio jail break: Authorities searched Monday for three convicts — including a man suspected of heading a multi-million-dollar drug ring — who escaped from a privately run prison by pulling a gun on a guard.

Mario Salinas-Trevino and two cellmates escaped from the central Texas parole violators facility in downtown San Antonio about 8:30 pm Sunday after forcing guards at gunpoint to let them out of the building, police said. (UPI)

Chinatown merchants strike: Bustling Chinatown virtually shut down Monday when merchants staged a strike to protest a plan to tear down the quake-damaged embarcadero freeway.

The merchants say the freeway is a vital link to Chinatown. Almost 1,200 shops, restaurants and professional offices, all but five small businesses, signed up to participate in the three-hour shutdown, said protest organiser Rose Pak of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. (AP)



Young rocks
Canadian rock star Neil Young performs at a sell-out rock concert in London at Wembley Stadium. (Reuters wirephoto)

TV viewing

Makes kids fat

CHICAGO, April 17. (Reuters) Children in the United States spend more time watching television than doing anything else but sleeping, and are becoming fat and violent as a result, the American Academy of Pediatrics said yesterday.

"Sufficient data have accumulated to warrant the conclusion that protracted television viewing is one cause of violent or aggressive behaviour," the group said. "Television viewing also contributes substantially to obesity."

The doctors made the comments in a policy statement published in the April issue of the American Academy of Pediatrics News.

"In 1989 the average child in the United States spent more time watching television than any other activity except sleeping — about 25 hours per week — the group said.

"The many implicit and explicit messages on television that promote alcohol consumption and promiscuous or unprotected sexual behaviour are also a cause for concern," it added.

Latin America

Priests write to Pope: A spokesman for the Roman Catholic Church on Monday said a letter to the Pope by more than 400 Mexican priests may have been inspired by "Marxist-Leninist elements."

The letter, printed in Monday's editions of the Mexico City daily La Jornada, addresses economic and social problems.

"Sometimes, those who write these letters do not present evangelical proposals, but Marxist-Leninist elements... the class struggle is not Christian and generates violence," Monsignor Genaro Alamilla, spokesman for the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico, said at a news conference.

Alamilla said that the Pope's visit "does not have a political or economic connotation, but pastoral." The priests late Monday had not yet responded to Alamilla's statements. (AP)

Argentina forces retirement: About 20,000 Argentine civil servants will be forced to give up their jobs by the end of April as part of the government's austerity programme to fight inflation.

Public Works and Services Minister Jose Roberto Dromi said on Monday that any public employee who had passed retirement age or was within two years of doing so should leave.

Anyone who held more than one job in the public sector had until the end of the month to decide which one to opt for.

"The measures affect around 90,000 employees," Dromi said in a radio interview. (Reuters)

Castro may visit Japan: Cuban President Fidel Castro may visit Japan to attend the enthronement ceremony for Emperor Akihito, a Japanese newspaper reported Tuesday.

Yomuri Shimshun quoted informed sources in Havana as saying Castro will go to Tokyo this autumn for his first visit to Japan since the Cuban Revolution in 1959.

The source reportedly said that Castro, who is also Cuba's head of state, wants to attend the ceremony in November if the Japanese government invites all the world's heads of state. (Kuna)

ymity, said some prefabricated items, such as toasters and some ferroalloys, had been imported.

The New York Times, quoting Commerce Department officials, reported Saturday that more than 900,000 tonnes of South African iron and steel products worth at least \$350 million had entered the United States despite the sanctions.

"Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no iron or steel produced in South Africa may be imported into the United

Intensify struggle against apartheid

Mandela urges London concert audience

LONDON, April 17. (AP) Nelson Mandela, bathed in a wave of cheers from 72,000 ecstatic admirers at a televised rock concert, urged a world-wide audience to intensify pressure on the South African government to end apartheid.

Cheers of "Nelson, Nelson, Nelson" punctuated nearly seven minutes of deafening cheers last night when Mandela strode triumphantly onto the Wembley stadium stage near the end of a five-hour concert and raised his arm in the famous clenched-fist salute of the African National Congress.

We must, however, remember that only a few have been released," said Mandela, who was freed from 27 years of captivity in South African jails on Feb 11.

"A greater number remains in prison. We should therefore treat this day of celebration as one of rededication to the continuation and intensification of the struggle for the emancipation of all the remaining political prisoners... and the system which keeps the outstanding sons and daughters of our people in jail."

He implored the world to keep up the struggle against the system of racial segregation in white-ruled South Africa, in which five million white-ruled voting rights and equal social services to the 28 million blacks, three million mixed-race citizens, and 850,000 Asians and Indians.

Crime
"The apartheid crime against humanity remains in place. It continues to kill and maim. It continues to oppress and exploit. Its bloodstained offspring continue to rain death and destruction on the peoples of Mozambique and Angola. Every day it produces orphans throughout Southern Africa," Mandela said.

"Therefore, do not listen to anyone who says that you must give up the struggle against apartheid. Reject any suggestion that the campaign to isolate the apartheid system should be wound down."

Before Mandela's speech, an international lineup of rock and jazz musicians performed more than four hours of political pop before the crowd in the stadium and millions of television viewers in 40 countries.

The British Reggae band Aswad opened with "Mandela's back in town," followed by Patil Labelle's "Oh People," the Neville Brothers' "My Blood," Neil Young's "Keep on Rockin' in the Free World," Jackson Browne and Johnny Clegg harmonizing in "One (human one vote)," and numbers by 1990 Grammy-winner Bonnie Raitt, Natalie Cole, Anita Baker and a dozen others.

Tracy Chapman sang before Mandela's appearance and once again when he finished speaking, delivering a moving, solo version of "talkin' 'bout a revolution."

Mandela left London about 90 minutes after his appearance aboard an Ethiopian Airlines flight to Addis Ababa. He had arrived on Sunday.

Mandela urged in his speech that sanctions be maintained and that Pretoria not be rewarded for the initial steps of releasing political prisoners or lifting the ban on the ANC. His comments were interpreted in the British media as veiled criticism of conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who has opposed sanctions.

"There are some in the world who wish to support the South African government by giving rewards and carrots. But we, representing the overwhelming majority of the people of our country, turn to you for support, which we need more than ever before," Mandela said.

"The reward the people of South Africa, and the rest of the world seek is the end of apartheid and the transformation of our country into a non-racial democracy."

Mandela departed from his prepared text to praise Tambo, who is recuperating from a stroke in a Swedish clinic, and express hope that he recover enough to continue leading the ANC.

Earlier, Mandela told reporters at a news conference that he came to Britain to thank those who had kept up pressure on South Africa for his release. And in his speech, he lavished loving words on the crowd.

The Times said Treasury Department lawyers had defined "steel" to exclude fabricated steel products such as girders, beams and plates used in the construction of bridges.

However, Congressman John Bryant took issue with the interpretation. "There is no excuse for the administration to allow even one ounce, much less billions of pounds, of such products to enter the United States," Bryant said.

33 more killed in black violence

JOHANNESBURG, April 17. (AP) At least 33 people were killed and dozens hurt in vicious black faction fighting over the Easter holiday, despite stepped up efforts by security forces, authorities said today.

The latest unrest came as President F.W. de Klerk was expected to make a major speech in Parliament today on further steps to dismantle apartheid. Conservative opposition groups said they would resist any attempt by the government to dismantle apartheid legislation.

Police said most of the fighting was in Natal province, where rival Zulu factions battled with guns and knives and set fire to homes and cars in clashes over the four-day holiday weekend.

The fighting pits the African National Congress-allied United Democratic Front against the conservative Inkatha Movement. Both groups are anti-apartheid, but differ over plans for a future South Africa.

Police said a man and two women were taken from their home yesterday near Port Shepstone in Natal and hacked to death by a mob that then burned the bodies.

A soldier and a police officer were killed during the weekend after security forces attempted to intervene in clashes in Natal, police said. Three police officers were hurt yesterday when they were stoned by a mob.

The government moved military reinforcements into Natal to try to stop the factional fighting that has claimed hundreds of lives in the region in recent weeks. Military patrols blocked roads and guarded black townships hit by bloody fighting in recent weeks.

Government officials, who declined to be named, said De Klerk would outline plans to dismantle major apartheid laws, including legislation allocating public amenities along racial lines.

The government wanted to present steps on ending apartheid before the start of talks next month with the ANC. The two sides are to try to clear the way for full-scale negotiations on ending white-minority rule.

South African newspapers reported today that the government hopes to boost international support for South Africa and end or reduce economic sanctions.

De Klerk, who has promised to end white-minority rule and share political power with blacks, legalized the ANC and other black opposition groups in February.

Malawi president arrives in Harare
HARARE, April 17. (AP) Malawi President Hastings Kamuzu Banda, on a rare foreign trip, arrived yesterday at the start of a seven-day visit to Zimbabwe.

Banda's visit coincides with celebrations April 18 marking the tenth anniversary of independence from Britain.

During his stay, the Malawian leader, believed aged in his 90's is expected to discuss peace initiatives in neighbouring Mozambique with President Robert Mugabe, a mediator in the 12-year civil war between the government and rebels of the Mozambique National Resistance.



Mandela raises his fist as he walks on stage at Wembley Arena in London on Monday. (Reuters wirephoto)



Thousands of people attend the Nelson Mandela tribute concert at Wembley Stadium in London on Monday. (Reuters wirephoto)

Angola peace formula

WASHINGTON, April 17. (Kuna) Though US-Soviet tensions persist on Lithuania, the superpowers yesterday seemed confident they can help craft a peace formula for Angola paralleling one they agreed on for Namibia.

The US and the USSR according to senior US officials, are pushing their respective clients to lay down arms and come to the bargaining table for direct talks.

The US supports the Unita rebels under Jonas Savimbi against the Soviet-backed Marxist regime of Angolan President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos.

A US official familiar with the backdoor US-Soviet discussions indicated to the Washington Post they may be bearing fruit.

Speaking of hints both sides wanted to explore each other's intentions at possible talks in Lisbon, the official said.

Bids to break UK jail siege

MANCHESTER, England, April 17. (Reuters) Authorities are stepping up pressure to end Britain's longest prison revolt after an outbreak of food poisoning at Strangeways jail hit the hard core of mutineers still holding out.

Jail officials said only seven prisoners remained inside the grim 19th century building in the northern city of Manchester after three rebels surrendered yesterday, apparently suffering from the effects of imbibing contaminated food and water.

Officials said the handful of hard men left late yesterday — 16th day of the siege — were existing in conditions of appalling squalor, eating food looped past its best.

Prison Governor Brendan O'Freil said authorities would now make more use of high pressure water jets to spray rebels on the rooftop and keep up a barrage of noise from police sirens to break their will and end the siege.

A doctor shouted a health warning to disband rebels on the roof — but they responded by bombing warders with tiles.

They held up a board displaying a chalked message that read: "We can re-assure you that everything is perfectly fine."

Another message dismissed the authorities' health scare as "a propaganda stunt."

Mary Stewart, vice-chairman of the prison's independent board of visitors, said the surrendering inmates had described "absolutely horrendous" conditions in the jail, wrecked when the riot broke out on April 1.

The three suffered from shivering, dizziness and diarrhoea and one bled from the mouth. They had been eating food from tins opened near the start of the siege, she said.

O'Freil told a news conference he feared the men could be suffering from salmonella — a serious form of food poisoning.

O'Freil said the authorities had decided at the weekend to switch tactics and step up pressure to end the siege after the failure of an expected mass surrender agreement last Friday.

"It was clear that for us just to sit there and do nothing did not encourage negotiations, he said.

O'Freil said, however, he was still committed to a peaceful end and negotiated end to the siege, despite growing pressure from some politicians and newspapers to storm the building.

Animals have some rights

NEW YORK, April 17. (AP) Most Americans say it should be illegal to kill animals for fur coats or to use them for cosmetics research, according to a poll released yesterday.

Eight in 10 respondents to the survey for Parents magazine said animals have some rights. Majorities disapproved of killing animals for sport or for making leather, but most did not favour outlawing those activities.

The survey was conducted by telephone from Sept 22 to Oct 10 among a random sample of 1,004 Americans age 21 and older. It has a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

The administration's definition of steel was upheld in a federal court in 1987, and certain prefabricated products that contain steel are not included in the definition of steel, she said.

"This administration will continue to enforce fully all provisions of the comprehensive anti-apartheid act," Tutwiler said. "This is an old issue that has been thoroughly reviewed by the Treasury Department."

Another US official, requesting anonymity, said some prefabricated items, such as toasters and some ferroalloys, had been imported.

The New York Times, quoting Commerce Department officials, reported Saturday that more than 900,000 tonnes of South African iron and steel products worth at least \$350 million had entered the United States despite the sanctions.

"Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no iron or steel produced in South Africa may be imported into the United

States," the law says. The Times said Treasury Department lawyers had defined "steel" to exclude fabricated steel products such as girders, beams and plates used in the construction of bridges.

However, Congressman John Bryant took issue with the interpretation. "There is no excuse for the administration to allow even one ounce, much less billions of pounds, of such products to enter the United States," Bryant said.

WASHINGTON, April 17. (AP) The administration of President George Bush is allowing South African iron and steel into the United States despite a 1986 economic sanction designed to force an end to apartheid, the State Department said yesterday.

Most of the controversial imports are ferroalloys, strategic commodities that Congress never intended to ban, said department spokeswoman Margaret D. Tutwiler.

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TAREEM EXHIBITION

INTERNATIONAL

Racial attack trial begins

NEW YORK, April 17, (AP) — The man accused of being the ringleader in a racial slaying carried a pistol and bragged that he was going to shoot blacks, the prosecution said yesterday at the start of his murder trial.

"Keith Mondello was going to murder a black man," assistant district attorney James Kohler said. "It didn't matter what black man. Yusuf Hawkins innocently appeared on the scene, and his fate was sealed."

A state supreme court jury began hearing the case against Mondello nearly eight months after 16-year-old Hawkins and three of his friends crossed paths with a mob of hat-wielding whites in the mostly white Bensonhurst section of the Borough of Brooklyn.

Prosecutors say Mondello, charged with two counts of second-degree murder and other crimes, did not shoot Hawkins, but created the circumstances that caused his death by assembling the white gang.

A second jury in the same courtroom was to hear opening statements in the trial of the accused gunman, Joseph Fama. However, those proceedings were postponed because defence lawyer David Depetris had the flu.

Mondello and Fama, both 19 years old and charged with two counts of second-degree murder, would face 25 years to live in prison if convicted.

Kohler charged the slaying was a racial murder motivated by Mondello's hatred of blacks and Hispanics.

"To call it anything else but a race riot would demean and trivialize the death of Yusuf Hawkins," Kohler said.

He added: "The person who will put many of the pieces to the puzzle together is the defendant himself."

In statements Mondello made to the police following his arrest, he admitted assembling the gang, admitted having a gun in his car and said he was carrying a bat at the time of the attack, the prosecutor said.

Mondello's lawyer, Stephen Murphy, disputed prosecutors' accounts of the killing and asserted his client was being falsely accused by Gina Feliciano, a key prosecution witness he described as a habitual liar and an unreformed drug addict.

Murphy said he would play for the jury a recorded conversation between Miss Feliciano and her sister that "makes it real clear that the truth has nothing to do with anything."

Murphy charges that the girl brought on the entire episode by inviting some black and Hispanic friends to an Aug 23 birthday party in the mostly Italian-American neighbourhood.

Murphy asserted that Mondello was "horrified" by the shooting.

Six other young whites also were indicted in the killing and will be tried later.

Black leaders appealed for unity and increased activism at the funeral of a black teen-ager whose shooting by a white policeman sparked a suburban rampage.

About 300 people packed community Baptist church yesterday in this New York suburb for the funeral of Phillip Pannell, 16, and about 200 more gathered outside to listen to the service over a speaker. Most were black.

Elected officials, religious leaders and community officials took turns at the pulpit to call for solidarity in the wake of Pannell's death.

Cricket threat

CARSON CITY, Nevada, April 17, (Reuters) — Hundreds of thousands of acres (hectares) of Nevada farmland are threatened by a plague of crop-devouring "Mormon" crickets with jaws strong enough to pierce human skin.

The voracious insects, which grow up to two-and-a-half inches (16 cm) long, are preparing to march across the state, eating everything in their path, agricultural officials said.

Robert Gronowski, director of the Nevada animal, plant, health inspection service, said the bugs are still in their breeding grounds in canyons 100 miles (160 km) north of Reno.

"There are literally hundreds of them per square yard (square metre) up there, the ground is black with them," he told Reuters.

They are called Mormon crickets because they were first discovered by Mormon settlers in 1848. They are not crickets at all, but members of the long-horned grasshopper family.

Unlike locusts, the crickets do not fly, but they are avid marchers, covering two miles (three km) every eight hours.

Protesters foil plan for anti-king rally

300 sign petition demanding visa for Romanian monarch

BUCHAREST, April 17, (AP) — Shouting "communists go to church" and "long live the king," several hundred pro-monarchy demonstrators yesterday foiled plans of the anti-king opposition to stage a rally in front of government headquarters.

Protesters in the pro-king camp said the anti-monarchy demonstration was staged by former communists, tacitly backed by the National Salvation Front, Romania's main contender for the May 20 elections.

"We don't want a king," shouted a middle-aged woman, as about a hundred allegedly pro-front supporters marched down the city's boulevards toward the government building and the nearby Victory Square.

There was some pushing and kicking between rival demonstrators but eventually they dispersed quietly, and there were no arrests.

The anti-king demonstrators wanted to show their backing for a government decision to withdraw a visa granted to exiled King

Michael of Romania to visit the country.

"Communists in disguise, go home or to church, it's a holiday today," scores of pro-king sympathisers shouted back.

"You fear you'll lose your well-paid jobs, you garbage," they chanted.

Later in the day, some 300 pro-king activists signed a petition they plan to send to the supreme court asking for a visa for the former monarch.

"The government, in withdrawing the visa, has violated the Helsinki accords on human rights," Nont Andronescu, a former political detainee and spokesman for the pro-king demonstration told the Associated Press.

He said the supporters also plan to send a written protest to the government, including Premier Petre Roman.

Romanian police, armed with submachine guns and wielding batons, cordoned off entrance to the square and prevented the organised anti-king demonstrators from

entering, saying they had no permission from the Bucharest mayor to stage the rally in that place.

The pro-king sympathisers praised the police decision, saying authorities did not permit the meeting because they feared clashes between the two camps.

Meanwhile, some 500 demonstrators of the nonparty Movement were allowed to enter the square after they displayed a letter stating they had the mayor's approval to assemble in Victory Square.

The demonstrators shouted anti-government slogans and asked that former communists be barred from getting leading jobs in the future administration for the next three parliamentary legislatures or 12 years.

Romanian ambassador to France Alexandru Paleologu was recalled to Bucharest for consultations yesterday after being publicly criticised Romanian Prime Minister Petre Roman, diplomatic sources said.



Rival groups kicked and punched each other during demonstrations for and against Romania's ruling National Salvation Front in Bucharest on Monday. The young woman being restrained in the foreground is shouting protest against Romania's ex-monarch King Michael who was refused an entry visa into Romania. (Reuters wirephoto).

NEWS IN BRIEF

America

US sponsoring anti-semites visit: The government is sponsoring a month-long US tour by a group of Russian writers that includes known anti-semites, a major Jewish group charged Monday night in Washington.

"This visit is not in the interests of the west generally," said David Harris, president of the American Jewish Committee.

A Russian Jewish emigre whose studies of anti-semitic writers were used by the committee, Semyon Reznick, said some writers in the group "exuded the myth of a Jewish-Zionist conspiracy, an old Russian hatred" in their work. (AP)

Bush nominates Thomas: President George Bush announced his selection Monday of Charles H. Thomas, a career Foreign Service officer, to be US Ambassador to Hungary.

Thomas, 55, most recently served as principal deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs. For almost a year he has been studying Hungarian in preparation for his new assignment.

If confirmed by the Senate, he would replace Mark Palmer, who recently retired from the Foreign Service for a job in international banking. (AP)

US will not rejoin Unesco: The White House has decided that the United States should not rejoin the UN Cultural Organisation Unesco, which it left in 1984, the New York Times reported on Tuesday.

In a report to be issued on Tuesday, the State Department says that Paris-based Unesco still wastes money, is poorly managed and has not taken a firm stand in defence of freedom of the press, the Times said. (Reuters)

Lincoln, Jefferson memorials: Two of Washington's most famous landmarks, the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials, are succumbing to water seepage, air pollution, littering tourists and a pesky little bug called the midge, experts say.

Private consultants hired by the national park service say the worst problem was found at the 68-year-old memorial honouring President Abraham Lincoln. Dripping rainwater has caused deterioration of huge concrete slabs that support a broad cobblestone walkway and the grassy terrace surrounding the building. (AP)

Europe

'No' to May Day rallies: Turkey's largest labour confederation has ruled against holding May Day rallies after one person was killed and dozens were injured during marches in Istanbul last May 1, a confederation official said on Monday.

Chairmen of 34 trade unions affiliated with the 1.7 million-member Turk-Is Confederation have decided to mark Labour Day by reading out a joint statement in union and factory halls, Burhan Dodanlı told Reuters. (Reuters)

Three killed in blast: A bomb exploded in a minibus Monday in Denizli, Turkey killing three people and wounding 11, the semi-official Anatolia News Agency reported.

The agency said four of the wounded were in critical condition.

The bomb was concealed in a package that had been handed to the driver by a teen-age boy, the agency said. The boy had asked the driver to take the package to one of the villages on the bus route in Mardin province. (AP)

Irish extremists clash: Masked gunmen shot dead a Catholic man in Northern Ireland Monday in a slaying officials said was probably linked to a feud between rival Irish extremist groups.

A spokesman for the Royal Ulster Constabulary said Eoin Morley, 23, apparently tried to escape when he was confronted by his assailants in the Derrybeg district of Newry, 40 miles (65 km) south of Belfast. (UPI)

Purchase did not succeed: An Italian businessman's bid to purchase the American cinema company MGM-United Artists would not succeed because American Jewish organisations had described a recent statement for the man as anti-Semitic, it was reported here Monday.

Jean Carlo Parry was seeking to buy that giant American company for months and offered \$1.2 billion in co-operation with another American cinema company "the Warner Brothers." (Kuna)

Cybernetics conference: The 10th European conference on cybernetics and systems research will be held at Vienna University on April 17-20.

This conference, which is the biggest international function of its kind in the cybernetics field, is held every two years.

About 300 scientists from all over the world are expected to attend. One of them will be Ivan Havel, the brother of Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel. (Kuna)



Basque National Day

French riot police break up a demonstration of 1,500 Basques as Nationalists set fire to French and Spanish flags during the Basque National Day celebrations in Hendaye on April 15.

Due to roll out US shuttles

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., April 17, (Reuters) — For the first time since the 1986 Challenger disaster, scientists are preparing two space shuttles for launch, prompting concern that thousands of workers are being pushed to keep an unrealistic flight schedule.

The US shuttle Columbia, on a tighter schedule than any spacecraft since December 1985, is due to roll out to its launch pad on April 22 for a May 9 launch carrying an astronomy observatory.

April 25 is the date for the shuttle Discovery's second liftoff attempt with the \$2.5 billion Hubble space telescope, after a scuttled launch on April 10, and will mark the first time in more than four years that NASA workers have had to divide their time between shuttles on both launch pads.

The double duty became necessary when the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) delayed the launch of Discovery so technicians could replace a faulty power steering unit in the shuttle and recharge batteries aboard the telescope.

The 88-pound (40-kg) unit was replaced on Sunday and is to be tested today. The two 450-pound (200-kg) battery packs were removed from the telescope for recharging on Saturday.

Child leaps to death: A 7-year-old girl impersonating the superheroine "Wonder Woman" jumped from the eighth floor of an apartment building and was killed instantly, police said Tuesday in Seoul.

First-grade student Chong Son-Ah died Sunday after she and a friend were accidentally locked on a fire escape while playing at their apartment building and Chong offered to get help, police said.

Police quoted the friend, identified only as Kim, as saying that Chong liked to imitate the television character "Wonder Woman" and felt she could leap from high building and survive. (AP)

Seoul executes murderers: South Korea executed on Tuesday nine murderers, most of them also convicted of repeated rape and armed robbery, the Justice Ministry said.

It said seven were hanged in a Seoul prison, one in the central city Taegu and one in Pusan to the southeast.

The last death sentences were carried out in South Korea in August, 1989, when seven people were hanged for robbery, sexual assault and murder. (Reuters)

EEC may withdraw support: The European Economic Community may withdraw its UN support from Prince Sihanouk's coalition government-in-exile during this year's general assembly session in September because the coalition continues to include the communist Khmer Rouge, diplomats said Monday.

Under the Khmer's rule from 1975 to 1978, more than a million Cambodians were believed to have been killed. (Kuna)

Lithuania renews demands for talks

Deadline expires with no cut in deliveries

MOSCOW, April 17, (Agencies) — Rebel Lithuania renewed demands for dialogue with the Kremlin today as the republic's parliament debated Moscow's threatened economic blockade.

President Vytautas Landsbergis told deputies that sanctions, announced by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev on Friday to force the republic to drop its independence bid, would damage Lithuania's economy.

The Baltic republic is heavily dependent on Moscow for essential supplies such as oil, but the Kremlin has so far held its hand on an

embargo. Gorbachev's threat alarmed Western governments, but the United States said yesterday Soviet failure to act on the threat to blockade Lithuania after expiry of a crucial deadline could herald a reduction in tensions there.

"Landsbergis said Moscow is using all means to pressure us into accepting economic threats, which would cause unemployment and make our situation harder," said a journalist at Lithuanian Radio, who heard the speech.

"Yet at the same time, he said that by organising a blockade and making us buy raw materials and other things for foreign currency, Moscow is recognising Lithuania as a separate state."

However, she said Landsbergis repeated calls made on Monday by Prime Minister Kazemiera Prunskiene for talks with the Kremlin both on economic sanctions and on a clash between Moscow and Vilnius over calls to boycott military service.

The parliament discussed a draft telegram to Moscow, saying the Lithuanian government saw no reason to "justify a worsening of economic relations, all the more so that this would not affect Lithuania alone."

"Moreover, we do not understand the content of the economic sanctions alluded to and would not like to give false explanations to our people and to the world," the telegram said.

"In these conditions, we see no way to resolve these questions other than Moscow urgently meeting a Lithuanian government delegation headed by the prime minister."

In a telegram to Gorbachev asking for a meeting, Prunskiene also said Lithuania wants to explain to its people what difficulties they may face if they continue ignoring the ultimatum.

The telegram said Lithuania wants to discuss the spring conscription of Lithuanian citizens into the Soviet Army, the protection of borders, and the rights of Lithuanian residents who want to remain citizens of the USSR.

Gorbachev on Friday gave Lithuania 48 hours to rescind laws aimed at halting the independence movement or face a cutoff of products the Soviet Union supplies to the republic. Gorbachev said that "anti-constitutional" actions promoting independence must be rescinded, including plans releasing Lithuanian youth from conscription into the Soviet Army and abolishing the republic's own identity cards.

The deadline expired last night with no visible cut in deliveries, but also no yielding by Lithuania.

Gorbachev has refused to meet with Lithuanians unless the republic cancels the independence declaration it made on March 11.

Some Lithuanian activists have characterised Gorbachev's statement on Friday as a softening, because he did not demand outright that the republic revoke its independence declaration.

In her telegram, Prunskiene said a broad economic boycott would damage both the Soviet and Lithuanian economy.

If measures are not defined, Prunskiene said in an interview on Soviet television last night, "this is a cold and very hard war, a war with the people of Lithuania, which includes people who consider themselves citizens of the Soviet Union."

Vilnius radio quoted Prunskiene as saying the leadership of Lithuania's legislature decided that "until we see definite physical measures against Lithuania's industry and economy, all contractual obligations to the USSR must continue to be carried out by all our enterprises, so there should be no pretext for possible disruption of supplies by the Soviet Union."

The telegram was sent to Gorbachev after an emergency meeting yesterday of the Presidium, or legislative leadership.



In support of prosecutors

A Soviet demonstrator (left) argues with militiamen in Moscow as he carries a poster asking controversial prosecutors Golyand and Ivanov not to take part in Tuesday's debate at the Supreme Soviet. The two special investigators have been suspended from duty for the alleged mishandling of a case. Poster reads: "Golyand and Ivanov, don't go to the Golgotha." At (right), a demonstrator holds a poster with names of various progressive political figures during a small rally in front of the Moscow City Council. (Reuters wirephotos)

Centre-rightists end Reds rule

Slovenia polls

BELGRADE, April 17, (Reuters) — A centre-right coalition ousted communists from power in Slovenia in a victory which set Yugoslavia's most Westernised republic apart from the rest of the country.

The communists, who have ruled Yugoslavia for 45 years, now face a tough fight to retain their grip on neighbouring Croatia, where free elections will be held on April 22 after a heated campaign coloured by nationalist passions and ethnic tensions.

"Slovenia has broken politically with Yugoslavia. It has a different political system now," one Western diplomat said.

"If the communists lose in Croatia there will, for all practical purposes, be two Yugoslavias."

Final results announced yesterday said the Democratic United Opposition of Slovenia (Demos) won 55 per cent of the vote in elections of April 8, giving it 47 of the 80 seats in the upper chamber of the Slovene Parliament.

The communists, who changed their name to the Democratic Reform Party and now advocate Western-style social democracy, won only 14 seats. The rest went to the left-of-centre Liberal Party.

Demos leader Jozse Pucnik told Reuters: "Our priority is to write

a new Slovene constitution which will guarantee Slovene sovereignty and pave the way for turning Yugoslavia into a confederation."

Slovenia, which has 1.9 million people, is Yugoslavia's most economically advanced republic, account for 30 per cent of exports and a fifth of the national product.

Demos wants autonomy inside or outside Yugoslavia for the republic, which borders Austria, Italy and Hungary, while nationalists within the coalition call for quick secession.

Demos policy on Slovene independence has vacillated and coalition leaders now play down the question of a possible split with the rest of Yugoslavia.

"We are not too clear right now about our plans for parliamentary action," Demos official Silvester Plahutnik said. The coalition, dominated by Christian Democrats and the Peasants' Union, has a strong nationalistic and agrarian slant.

The democratic reform party says its future role depends on the outcome of elections to the lower house of Parliament on April 22.

"If Demos gets an absolute majority in the entire Parliament we will have to become an opposition party," party official Petar Bekes said.

Soviets hope 50pc arms cut in June

ROME, April 17, (UPI) — Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze said in an interview published yesterday the Soviet Union expects to reach basic agreement on a 50 per cent reduction of strategic offensive weapons during the Bush-Gorbachev summit meeting in June.

He also said the Soviet Union hopes to sign a bilateral accord on the "radical reduction" of chemical weapons, to give an impulse to the negotiations on reduction of conventional weapons in Europe and also make advances toward a ban on nuclear experiments.

Shevardnadze expressed his hopes for the summit meeting between President Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, set for Washington, May 30-June 3, in a Moscow interview with the Italian news agency Ansa.

The occasion for the interview was the current visit to Moscow of Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis, who is scheduled to have separate talks with Shevardnadze and Gorbachev.

Asked what "concrete results" the Soviet Union expects from the Washington summit, the Soviet foreign minister said:

"The parties intend to reach an accord on the problems relative to the treaty on a 50 per cent reduction of offensive strategic weapons and initial it in Washington during the meeting between the US and Soviet presidents. By this I mean: to say that, in this event, the signing of the treaty is foreseen for the end of this year."

"Another important practical result of the Washington negotiations should be the signing of a bilateral agreement on a radical reduction of the arsenals of chemical weapons, as a step toward their complete elimination," Shevardnadze said.

"It is obvious that, taking account of the role of our two countries in the European process, the presidents could give a serious impulse to the negotiations for the reduction of conventional arms in Europe, which are about to enter the conclusive stage," he said.

East European young black marketeers discover new 'silk road' to Beijing

BEIJING, April 17, (Reuters) — Hundreds of young Eastern Europeans have established a new "silk road," buying up the bounty of China and then lugging it half way across the world and through the Berlin Wall to the West.

Unlike the ancient trade route that snaked across deserts and mountains from Beijing through Central Asia to Europe, the new "road" is a railway track from China to Mongolia, the Soviet Union and then westward via Berlin.

But like the old camel caravans and mule trains of the past, modern travellers are loaded up with cargoes of silk, pearls and other exotics from China's interior.

Deals are struck informally, sometimes illegally, and an omnipresent black market greases the wheels.

"Life is good," Andre, a young Pole and self-professed black marketer, told this journalist during a recent trip to Ulan Bator, Mongolia — the first stop for traders travelling overland from Beijing to Europe.

"You can travel many places, make a little money and sometimes you can find a woman along the way," he said, propping up the bar at Ulan Bator's Bayan Gol hotel.

The bar is Ulan Bator's only disco and a favoured watering hole for the Eastern Europeans.

Traders said the dynamics of their livelihood were simple. China has abundant, cheap goods and Eastern Europe has few.

Since the dismantling of the Berlin Wall last November,

big spenders in the West have become more accessible than at any time since World War Two, they said.

And although most of Eastern Europe is espousing capitalism, many countries are still members of a loose "socialist brotherhood" with China, thereby remaining eligible for a gamut of "friendship" benefits.

Daniel, a university student from Czechoslovakia, said his train ticket — Ulan Bator, Beijing, Canton and back — bought in Prague, cost him \$30. That is a fraction of what Westerners pay for the same ticket.

Tickets on the trans-Siberian railway from Europe to China are also sold at knock-down rates in Eastern Europe. Daniel took a plane from Prague to Ulan Bator

which cost him the black market equivalent of \$18.

"For us it is a kind of silk road," said Daniel, who speaks English, Russian and Polish fluently.

When in Beijing, he stays in a hostel near the Temple of Heaven free market where private businessmen from China's south gather each morning to hawk freshwater pearls.

A necklace of the lowest quality pearls costs four yuan (85 cents). The highest quality costs about 30 yuan (\$6.3).

"If Ulan Bator the people have nothing. No money and nothing to buy, so you have to sell them cheap necklaces," said Daniel. "A five yuan necklace goes for two dollars (9.4 yuan)."

Jaruzelski may resign next year

Walesa enigmatic

WARSAW, April 14, (UPI): President Wojciech Jaruzelski may resign after new parliamentary elections expected next year but will not step down now, the spokesman for his office said today.

The former Communist Party leader is realistic about the future and "will insist on the full six-year term" to which he was elected by parliament last July, spokesman Slawomir Witek told United Press International.

On the other hand, "Jaruzelski has no reasons to consider his resignation (now) because his cooperation with the government and parliament is good," he said.

Witek was responding to a declaration by Solidarity leader Lech Walesa that Jaruzelski is not leading Poland and he will run for the job of president "in the next elections."

The presidential spokesman suggested Walesa's statement was part of his strategy before the Solidarity congress to begin Thursday in the seaport of Gdansk.

Although the next parliamentary elections are due until 1993, fully free elections are expected to be held next year because the June 1989 elections involved a political agreement in which Solidarity could run for only 35 per cent of the seats in the lower house of parliament.

Witek suggested that Jaruzelski would "seek approval from the new parliament and government" after the next elections, and if it were not forthcoming, he might resign.

"If he (Jaruzelski) recognises the political and economic reforms he has initiated have been peacefully steered through this hot period, the merits are more important, and not the term," he said.

Meanwhile, Danuta Walesa, the wife of Solidarity leader Lech Walesa, based the secrets of Poland's best-known family yesterday, saying her husband is enigmatic and difficult to get along with.

Mrs. Walesa, an attractive brunette in her late 30s and the mother of Walesa's eight children, told a talk-show hostess on state television: "Lech is not an easy man to love, understand and be with. I don't think any other woman could put up with him."

"He's always so secretive. You talk to him and you never know if you're getting through or what he's thinking about," she said of the man widely expected to become Poland's next president.

Polish Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski Tuesday arrives in Belgrade on an official three day visit to Yugoslavia for talks with his Yugoslav counterpart Budimir Loncar on current developments in East Europe.

Skubiszewski Loncar's talks will also touch on the two Germanies reunification and its impact on security and co-operation in Europe, and the future of political and economic co-operation among the European countries in light of the new developments.

Berlin's rag-tag bazaar

Influx of Poles

WEST BERLIN, April 17, (AP): Even the Easter holidays didn't stop thousands of Poles from streaming into West Berlin — some to shop, others to sell.

The influx of Poles to West Berlin, one of the few Western European places they can visit without visas, has increased dramatically since the Polish zloty became convertible currency in January. City officials say more than a million Poles have visited since January.

Many of them head for a muddy, littered field near Potsdamer Platz known as the "Polish Market" — a ragtag bazaar where Poles sell whatever they can bring from home — caviar, fresh eggs and bacon, untaxed cigarettes and Polish vodka.

It is both an introduction to free-market practices and a crucial source of income for Poles weathering their country's radical economic changes.

"Who knows how long I'll have a job. I'm sure the company will go bust by June," said Krzysztof Goral, a bus driver from Poznan, as he tried to sell a pair of mounted deer antlers for 15 marks (\$9.33).

"We've got to try to earn while we can," said his brother Marek, an electrician, who watched over a pile of chocolates and wooden-handled screwdrivers the brothers also had for sale.

The Goral brothers are regulars at the Polish market. Every Friday they take an evening train on the 331-km (205-mile) trip to East Berlin. Upon arrival, they stay up all night in order to avoid a hotel bill, then cross into West Berlin to stake out a spot at the market early in the morning.

Many other Polish visitors sleep in their cars, tour buses or try to camp in the zoo train station.

Those habits, along with the wide-open trading at the market, appeal many Berliners who would like the city government to do something to stop the flow.

Poles call it business; Germans call it smuggling. Officials have recorded more than 26,000 customs violations since the

German Unity talks set to start

BONN, April 17, (AP): Officials from the two German nations this week will return to talks setting the course for unification, the West German government said yesterday.

The discussions were put on hold while a new government was being formed in East Germany.

East Germany's first democratically elected government, headed by Prime Minister Lothar de Maiziere, was sworn in last week.

Government officials in Bonn, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Chancellor Helmut Kohl and De Maiziere will likely meet sometime next week to discuss steps toward unification.

East German Interior Minister Peter-Michael Diestel and his West German counterpart, Wolfgang Schaumburg, plan to meet in Bonn tomorrow.

year began. "Things are hard in Poland, I've got two kids and no job. I've got to make a living," said Stanislaw Neuman of Wrocław.

Neuman lost his job last month as a bus driver as a part of the radical economic reform plan that ended state subsidies and left over 200,000 unemployed since it took effect Jan 1.

Bhattacharai to choose cabinet

Nepal's premier-designate vows polls within a year

KATMANDU, April 17, (UPI): Leaders of the opposition, buoyed in their drive toward multi-party democracy by the selection of one of their own as prime minister, held separate meetings today to discuss cabinet nominations, an opposition official said.

Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, acting president of the opposition Nepali Congress Party who was chosen yesterday as Premier by King Birendra, must reserve two spots among his nine cabinet choices for representatives of the monarch.

Leaders of the Nepali Congress Party and the United Left Front — a coalition of seven leftist parties — met separately today prior to joint discussions to finalise cabinet

nominations, said P.L. Singh, secretary to Ganesh Man Singh, supreme leader of the Nepali Congress.

"The initial idea was to have a small government of nine members but it seems that will be too small and we might have a bigger government," the secretary said.

Birendra had earlier yesterday accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Lokeendra Bahadur Chand, dissolved Parliament and officially lifted a ban on political parties.

Chand had been appointed by the king amid a wave of pro-democracy protests that began Feb 18, paralyzing the capital and leaving at least 53 people dead as troops and police tried to control crowds at times as large as 200,000.

After the 65-year-old Bhattarai was appointed premier, he told reporters, "I do not know to what extent I can do (justice) to the people who have sacrificed their lives in the movement, but I will do my level best."

Bhattarai, who was speaker of the Parliament when it was dissolved in 1960 by the father of the present monarch, said elections "will be held within one year's time," but he did not pinpoint a date for Nepal's first balloting under a multi-party system since the 1959 elections.

He also pledged to work for lowering the voting age from 21 to 18 and to introduce a one-person, one-vote system.

In addition, Bhattarai said his government will repeal all draconian security laws, which allow the government to arrest people for months without assigning any reason, and pledged to form the constitution drafting committee immediately and require a report within 90 days.

Bhattarai, also said that the king, who has wielded absolute power, "was very receptive and welcomed the idea of (becoming) a constitutional monarch."

Chand is heading a four-member ministry to handle daily administration of government until the new leadership is in place.

The monarch had proposed Nepali Congress leader Singh, 75, to be the new prime minister, but Singh declined on health grounds and proposed Bhattarai.

Birendra and the Nepali Congress Party and the United Left Front swiftly endorsed Bhattarai's candidacy.

After winning the endorsement, Bhattarai told reporters, "It's a big challenge for a person like me, who is not mentally prepared to shoulder the responsibility of this high post, but (I am) happy and thankful to all the friends within my party and the United Left Front who expressed their faith in me."

The Nepali Congress Party was elected by an overwhelming majority in Nepal's first general elections in 1959, but King Mahendra, father of the present monarch, dismissed the legislature in December 1960 and introduced the partyless panchayat form of government dominated by the royal palace.

Bhattarai vowed to "work to end the broad economic blockade against Nepal instituted by India in March 1989, saying, "the differences between Nepal and India needed to be sorted out first, so that economic sufferings of the people could be lessened."

Novelist

Court upholds death sentence

TOKYO, April 17, (UPI): The Supreme Court upheld today the capital punishment against a death row convict who won acclaim for best-selling and award-winning autobiographical novels he has written while serving in prison.

Japan's highest court handed down the ruling by rejecting an appeal by Norio Nagayama, 40, who was convicted on charges of slaying four people in a series of robbery attempts in 1968.

"In light of the nature of the crimes, their motives and results, and fully considering the childhood of the accused and his age at the time of the crimes, I cannot help but to allow the death penalty to be upheld," presiding judge Mitsuhiro Yasuoka said in dismissing Nagayama's appeal.

Future computer may be talking

TOKYO, April 17, (AP): Dealing with future generations of computers may be more like talking with people, so American scientist being hoisted in Japan of the "father of artificial intelligence" said yesterday.

Professor Marvin Minsky of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology spoke at a news conference on the eve of receiving one of the two 1990 Japan prizes, worth 50 million yen (\$315,000) each.

The other prize, for earth science, is being shared by American Professor William Jasso Morgan of Princeton University, Professor Dao Peter McKenzie of Britain's Cambridge University and Xavier Le Pichon, director of the Ecole Normale Supérieure in France.

There is for work in formulating the theory that the Earth's crust is made up of rigid tectonic plates that grind against each other, causing earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and the formations of ridges and mountains.

Surprising Morgan told the news conference that despite progress in forecasting places and sizes of earthquakes, predicting the exact time "is still pretty much in the future."

Minsky, who deals with how to make machines learn more by themselves, is receiving his prize in the field of "technology of integration."

"I think the most surprising thing that came out of this field of artificial intelligence is this: in the early years, we were able to make computers do things that were very difficult for people," Minsky said.

He cited difficult mathematical problems and complex industrial tasks. "It is much harder to make computers do things that ordinary people do... Every child learns to speak. Every child learns to move and do ordinary things that we still cannot make a robot do," he added.

"We're still beginning to make them do things that little children do. But of course that's very important because if you can make a little child, then it can learn itself and grow," Minsky said.

Predictions Asked for predictions, Minsky said that in the next few years, a computer "will be able to watch your eyes and your face and will be able to tell what interests you."

It might, for example, enlarge whatever the operator is studying on the screen, he said.

Minsky said some computers now can recognise spoken words without understanding their meaning.

"In another generation, maybe 10 years, maybe 50, the computer will have more understanding, like a child, and know what words really mean, and then it will be more like talking to another person," he said.

"Once that happens, it's impossible to make predictions," he added.

He urged a new approach to understanding the complex processes of the human mind.

"If a scientist sees 500 other scientists agreeing, then he should not agree because then he is a useless person," Minsky said. "The important thing is to develop many different theories and then find a way to combine them. The bad thing to do is to compare the theories and ask which is better because in thinking, different people are good at different things because they think in different ways, and we must learn to understand the many different ways."

Hopeful McKenzie said that with the tectonic plate theory of explaining such things as earthquakes, "suddenly the motions themselves became really rather obvious... and we could worry" about what drives the plates' movements.

He said that trying to predict quakes was something like putting pressure on a piece of glass and knowing that it would break, but not knowing when.

Morgan said, "It's still a hopeful area."



Ganesh Man Singh supreme leader of the Nepali Congress.



Break-in reported at office of vessel's sponsor

'Boat for China' target of harassment

PARIS, April 17, (AP): A radio ship headed to the Far East to transmit pro-democracy broadcasts into China has been the target of surveillance and harassment by Chinese officials since it left France, its sponsors said yesterday.

A coalition of sponsoring groups, headed by the French magazine Actuel, said China has tried to place pressure on various foreign governments in an effort to undermine the "Boat for China" operation.

Actuel said yesterday that its editorial offices in Paris were broken into and ransacked over the weekend, with the intruders stealing documents and computer disks related to the ship, as well as the word processor of a reporter covering the operation.

Since leaving France on March 17, the ship "has been the target of administrative harassment, especially in customs where it stopped, and of constant surveillance and intimidation by the Chinese authorities," the coalition said in a statement.

The coalition said the 80-metre (260-foot) Goddess of Democracy had been able to leave Djibouti, on the horn of Africa, after being held in port for several days for "various technical and administrative reasons."

The ship "now enters sensitive waters where the pressure of Chinese authorities is likely to increase significantly," the statement said. It described the project as "totally peaceful, with no protection

except that of international public opinion."

The 1,200-tonne ship — a former British oceanographic vessel — is sponsored by 18 press organisations from several countries in collaboration with the Federation for Democracy in China, a Paris-based organisation of Chinese dissidents.

China will be barred from this week's major conference on world air pollution in Washington, US officials said yesterday.

White House spokesman Stephen Hart said China, despite its status as a major polluter through the vast amounts of coal it burns, cannot attend the conference because of sanctions ordered by President George Bush last year.

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KUWAIT ... GULF

No diseased sheep in Kuwait: Sultan

Routine checks intensified

THE deputy director-general for Animal Resources Affairs at the Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources Dr Sultan Ahmad Sultan has denied the presence of diseased Australian sheep in the country, infected with high-risk contagious diseases harmful to both humans and animals.

He told a local daily that the authority

carries out regular tests on imported cattle, particularly on the types slaughtered for their meat.

Random testing

He added that these routine checks have been intensified during the month of Ramadan due to the large quantities of

imported animals to meet the growing demand.

He pointed out that out of 80,000 Australian sheep imported recently, 9,000 heads were chosen at random for testing and the results revealed no skin infections or any other diseases. The official stressed that Kuwait is in constant touch with Arab

countries which import cattle from the same source to learn of any diseases or infections.

He said that Kuwait usually imports 800,000 sheep heads from Turkey and two million from Australia, which are far greater than the actual local demand.

Increase in Arab workforce expected

ACCORDING to a report issued by the Arab Labour Organisation the Arab workforce has been estimated at around 64,000,000 workers in 1990, and this figure is expected to jump to 89,000,000 at the turn of the century.

It said that the Arab World generally exhibits low economic performance rates, whether at an overall level or at the level of males and females as the public participation percentage is about 29 per cent of the total Arab population, while women participation in the economic sector is extremely low and does not exceed 11 per cent in most Arab countries.

The workforce is noticeably high in the fields of agriculture, hunting, and mining, given the existing variations in percentages, as in the Sudan and Somalia the percentage is more than 60 per cent compared to lower than 10 per cent in the UAE, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar, the report added.

It also indicated that the percentage of workers in the industrial sector is still relatively low ranging between 9 per cent in Somalia, Mauritania, Yemen Arab Republic and over 30 per cent in Kuwait, Syria, Bahrain and the UAE.

Only 50 per cent of the workforce is found in the agricultural sector while 15 per cent is hosted by the industrial sector compared to 35 per cent in the services sector.

Performance evaluation methods criticised

AN OFFICIAL source at the Education Ministry sharply criticised the way the employees performance evaluation reports are made. The source said that during the 87-88 academic year, over 13,000 teachers representing 50.6 per cent were given "Excellent" reports, 12,873 teachers or 49.4 per cent were given "Good" reports and only 8 were given "Weak". The source said that it is clear from these reports that personal and other considerations count in evaluating the employees.

The source regretted that the civil service system in Kuwait heavily depends upon reports in considering promotions, allowances and all forms of rewards without taking into account the other aspects of performance.

The source described the results as "abnormal" and leads only to discouragement of hard workers. The source said as the direct supervisor is entrusted of working out the reports, personal considerations play a great role in the issue. This is the main reason for the large number of employees getting excellent reports which would ultimately mean that many employees who really don't deserve obtain excellent reports. The source stressed that this will induce a spirit of desperation and depression among hard working employees.

Science Club activities to continue

SHEIKH Sabah Al Hmoud of the Kuwait Scientific Club has said that the proposed construction of the Kuwait Scientific City Project is blessed by HH the Amir, amidst growing scientific challenges in the world.

He said that over the past 14 years the club spared no efforts to ensure the continuity of its constantly-expanding scientific activities, and accommodate the increasing applicants for membership.

He deplored the decline of youngsters to pursue scientific knowledge, pointing out that it has become imperative to set up branches for the club in different locations in the country and furnish them with all needed equipment to create the right scientific atmosphere and encourage youths to join in and practise scientific activities.



Qerqian celebration

Kuwait Municipality Public Relations Department held a Qerqian celebration and invited to it municipality employees families and a large number of guests. The celebration was also attended by Nasser Al Ayyar, director of the Public Relations Department.

Qerqian sakes full of sweets and nuts were distributed among children in addition to several other musical and entertainment programmes. The celebration aimed at reviving some of the old traditions in Kuwait during the holy month of Ramadan.

KMPC to provide pipes for water supply project

Tenders to be published soon

THE deputy chairman and managing director at Kuwait Metal Pipe Industries Company, Dr. Ahmed Al Roudhan was quoted as saying that negotiations are being conducted between the company and the Ministry of Electricity and Water to determine specifications of pipes to be used in Water Supply Project from Iraq to Kuwait.

In an interview with a local daily, the official said that on concluding agreements with respect to the specifications of the pipes required for such a major project, the company will publish tenders for importing technical equipments tailored to produce the required quantities.

The official said that relevant studies will be finalised soon, particularly in keeping with the deep concern evidenced by officials at the Ministry of Electricity and Water on this issue.

Protection

Roudhan said that his company is one of the pioneering firms in the region in the area of oil, gas and water pipes and commented that the company has protected the local market from the monopoly of foreign firms. He added that his company besides meeting local requirements, exported some of its production to sisterly countries including Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The official declared that Saudi Arabia based Al Qassem Water Supply Project's relevant pipe tender was awarded to Kuwait Metal

Pipes Industries and that all the pipe requirements in the project were manufactured in Kuwait.

In addition to meeting the Ministry of Electricity and Water and the other national institutions requirements of pipes, the company will also meet the requirements of Al Subbiya Industrial Area, Roudhan said.

Meanwhile, official praised the efforts exerted by HH the Amir and HH the Crown Prince and Premier towards reactivating the country's economy. He pointed out that these efforts will be reflected on all national sectors. On the company's production, the official said that it produced about 150,000 tons of metal pipes and in response to government trends aims at encouraging national industries and local investments. The company is currently involved in modernising an old plant to improve its performance to meet local market requirements of small diameter pipes.

Presently, the company is undertaking an administrative development process for minimising the workforce by incorporating advanced technology, including computers. The company is also paying more concern to the investment activities which constitute important feeders for the company's revenues. Over and above, the company is adopting investment policies which are risk free. The company will achieve substantial profits during the current fiscal year, Roudhan said.

Investment funds will expand trade: Humaidi

THE chairman of the board and managing director of the Securities Group Bader Fahd Al Humaidi has said that the law governing the establishment of investment funds forms a major turning point in the march of the local stock-exchange markets in the region.

He told a local daily that these funds will affect the tradability of shares and expand the demand for real estate investment and consequently result in a price rise.

The demand for local shares will increase as the majority of local companies own great financial surpluses, while the demand by individuals will increase due to the inability of some to participate in the stock-exchange market because of insufficient financial power.

He said that individuals of

small, medium and large financial standing are expected to join in, under the lure of great benefit from participating long-experienced operators.

Humaidi said that the local market will offer profitable company shares tradable at moderate rates compared to their true value, adding that this will further expand the existing gap between the prices of the shares of powerful companies and companies suffering from basic problems.

This will encourage companies to improve their standing, spread confidence in the market and the establishment of specialised funds besides enriching the existing options, he added.

He pointed out that the executive code of the establishing law specified two types

of investment funds, one with fixed capital and the other with variable capital that does not change throughout the operation of the fund.

He said that the related units will be tradable in the relevant market and this consequently led to the definition of the unit price based on the volume of supply and demand, while in the case of the variable capital, the variability will range between two limited extremes with the subscription or retrieval liable to the approval of the fund manager and in the best interest of the fund itself.

He hoped that the accompanying legal procedure will be flexible enough to serve the best interest of the investor, with great emphasis on the efficiency of the manager and the legal conditions on subscription.

Smoking on the increase: Mumin

THE head of Anti-Smoking and Cancer Society Dr. Hussein Al Mumin has announced that the number of boys and girls who take up smoking are increasing in Kuwait although they are reducing in the West. He referred this phenomena to the lack of supporting informational programmes and also to the absence of a law that prevents smoking in schools and public places besides allowing sale of cigarettes to young boys. He added that the most dangerous aspect that encourages youth to smoke is the campaign that is carried out by cigarette companies. Last year, one of these companies brought a robot that was distributing cigarettes and lighters to children at Daeya Co-operative Society. He added that society should urgently carry out awareness campaigns to enlighten the public on the hazards of smoking

Women

Mumin pointed out that presently 12 per cent of smokers in Kuwait are women compared to 5 per cent only ten years ago. He added that lung cancer (usually caused by smoking) increased among women during the last few years. He added that the society made a study on a group of girls in the intermediate schools and found that 50 per cent of them had tried smoking.

The study showed that about 8 per cent of girls in schools of courses system smoke. He added that travelling of families to Europe and giving girls freedom to be away from their parents teach these girls some bad habits like smoking. He expressed sorrow on the increase of numbers of smokers among young girls and women in Kuwait and deplored their smoking in some public places and cafeterias and in the presence of their children.

Criticism

Meanwhile, a number of citizens have criticised women who smoke and described them as imitating men and lacking in femininity. The well-known Kuwaiti astronomer Dr Saleh Al Ojairi added that Kuwaiti women were good examples to their society and families. They were not affected by strange values although their men left them for several months alone with their children. But he added that the open society of Kuwait at present has affected a certain category of women who have begun practising bad habits. All women smokers know that society does not accept their behaviour and they also know the harms of smoking, yet the number of women smokers is increasing in Kuwait, Ojairi said.

The head of public relations at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour has referred the increasing number of women smokers to the freedom given to those women in Kuwait. He wondered how women smokers accept the bad breath coming out of their mouths and added that smoking began spreading among young girls in schools and even in some public places. He commented that most strange thing is that some women believe that smoking is a sign of sophistication.

Captain Ismael Hassan from General Fire Department said that Kuwait society is a reserved society and frowns on women who smoke. Men in our society do not respect women smokers because they see that they are liberal and do not abide by the social and religious values, he added.

Maids may form 10pc of Kuwait's population

Over 250 recruitment agencies here

ACCORDING to unofficial statistics the number of maids and domestics in Kuwait is slightly more than 150,000 and based upon the current maids recruitment rate, the number is expected to be around 200,000 in three years. This would constitute maids forming 10 per cent of Kuwait's population. The illegal maids recruitment offices, spread all over the country in great numbers, are blamed for encouraging the recruitment of maids. Observers stress that the position of these offices has been in complete disarray as the Ministry of Commerce and Industry failed so far to stop this underground business. The maids offices were declared illegal and owners were asked to shut them down. But these offices are still operating and publishing advertisements in the local press under the nose of concerned officials.

Warning

The number of maids was less than 20,000 in 1982 and since then shot up by over 700 per cent. Majority, if not all of the maids are recruited through manpower

recruitment offices which offer their services by advertising in the local newspapers. According to observers who have been following this phenomenon, maids were brought into the country a few years ago with the sole purpose of house work, particularly cleaning.

Now, they have been in addition turned into baby sitters, cooks and other services to the extent that many psychologists have warned that children have become more attached to maids than their mothers.

The immigration departments of the Interior Ministry issues about 10,000 works permits on an average every month and over 80 per cent of them go to maids and domestics. Officials insist that the main culprit in aggravating this social problem is the maids recruitment offices. The number of these offices according to informed sources is more than 250. Some of these offices have several branches in various areas. The main and only purpose of these offices is profit making.

The easy business and the huge profits it yields without the need for a big capital, have all encouraged more people to open such offices. Owners of such offices can easily obtain the commercial licence from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry since they claim they are opening the office for trading and contracting. They pay small rents particularly in remote areas and on recruitment of maids they bear no costs. They simply contact specialised labour recruitment agencies in the foreign country and ask them to send the number of maids they need. Those labour agencies in addition pay a commission to these offices. Now after the arrival of maids, owners simply receive them at the airport and immediately surrender them to the people who requested for them against paying an amount ranging between KD 30-50 or more.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry inspectors have so far kept their eyes closed on the inhuman behaviour of many of these offices.



Amiri medals

Director of the Jafra Traffic Department, Col Faisal Al Roudhan gave away medals presented by HH the Amir to a number of the department's officers for their excellent services.

Female students bemoan problems

FEMALE students at the Technical Studies College encounter several problems and claim that these problems are obstacles to their education and training.

A number of students stated that they do not have their own building. They indicated that currently available laboratories lack required equipments, safety devices and first aid. They disclosed that they have not been paid work allowances after graduation and added that students bonuses have also been delayed.

A local daily toured the college and interviewed a number of female students at the Organic Chemistry Department.

Huda Ali Al Faraj, head of the Students Council at the college, said that despite other departments extending full co-operation and understanding towards students problems, female students particularly at the Organic Chemistry Department suffer from many difficulties. She indicated that most laboratories are not fully equipped, they also lack safety and first aid equipments. She added that despite the risks they face while working with chemicals, they are not granted any work allowances after graduation. They pointed out that that acids used at the laboratory may cause cancer. Regarding bonuses received by students at the beginning of the month she said that they do not arrive on time which causes many students problems particularly those with financial commitments.

Ordeal

On the other hand, registering for courses at the Technical Studies College is an ordeal due to the small size of lecture areas. She said usually only 40 out of 150 students get accepted in each course. She indicated that the college parking areas are not enough to cover the need of students and some students are forced to park their vehicles in the desert.

Haleema Juma Abdullah a student complained from the quality of foods catered by the college cafeteria. She said that the price of meals is expensive. She added that their vehicles require more parking areas, and that they are forced to park behind the college at most times. She pointed out that their bonuses sent to the college by the Civil Service Commission are not received on time. She added that their bonuses had dropped in value from KD 150 to KD 50.

On the other hand, Fatima Mohammed Shebab stated that the college has failed to provide students with good guidance and added that many mistakes occurred during registration.

Medical fund pays out over KD2m

THE director-general of the Patients Aid Fund Allam Al Kandari has said that it paid over KD2 million to support public medical services in Kuwait and that 85 per cent of the total expenditures have been used inside Kuwait.

He said that 250 families are regularly beneficiaries and the fund had sponsored the provisions of medical supplies to Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan and to the camps of Afghan immigrants, besides the provision of tens of sacks of pharmaceutical supplies to hospitals and supporting the salaries of doctors operating in health and medical centres and hospitals in poor Islamic countries.

The fund also supported the construction of public and private medical clinics in the Sudan, Lebanon and Palestine and pays regular monthly aid to poor patients.

The official said that the fund also provided medical equipment and aid facilities to patients with varying disabilities, such as wheel chairs to the crippled, bearing aid to the deaf, prescription glasses and artificial limbs to the maimed, besides spreading health education through the publication of manuals.

Airlanka continues to earn record breaking revenues

Sales manager appointed for Australia

AIRLANKA continues to earn record breaking revenues with the January 1990 figures reaching an all-time high of Rs 684 million.

This will undoubtedly be a significant turning point in the history of the airline.

Despite the escalating fuel costs and heavy past debt repayments, the airline is increasing its profitability and is now well on the road to recovery. The reforms initiated under the firm and

caring guidance of the President, are now paying handsome dividends.

The airline is currently experiencing unprecedented cabin factors. The company has a healthy cash flow with a cash operating surplus of over Rs1 billion.

With the whole-hearted support of the vast majority of the staff, Airlanka is now breaking into new avenues for further enhancing revenues and improving the service to its passengers.

On a directive given by the President, Airlanka recently inaugurated an all-

cargo regular charter from Colombo to Amsterdam. The first cargo charter left Colombo international airport Katunayake on February 27, 1990, with a full capacity load of Sri Lankan exports.

This fortnightly cargo charter service will in due course be increased to a weekly service. Airlanka will proudly carry the products of our rural farmers and other export producers to destinations around the globe, thus keeping faith with the President's promise to make the national carrier a meaningful

enterprise for the people of Sri Lanka.

Airlanka also has the pleasure to announce the appointment of Chandana Wickramaratne as sales manager to Australia with effect from Feb 22, 1990.

Wickramaratne is a Sri Lankan and prior to emigration to Australia in 1976, he obtained extensive training and experience in the airline travel scene, locally. Starting off at Air Ceylon in 1967, he served stints at Malaysia — Singapore Airlines (MSA)

and the Ceylon Hotels Corporation, where he handled sales for British Airways and Qantas Airways.

After emigrating to Australia in 1976, Wickramaratne joined Steward Moffat Travel (NSW) Pty Limited as travel consultant. Up to the present Wickramaratne headed the consolidation unit of Steward Moffat for the whole of Australia.

With his wide training and experience in the fields of aviation and

travel, Wickramaratne joins Airlanka is preparing to fly in to Australia in May this year. His services will therefore be invaluable in the intensive sales and marketing that will have to be engaged in, in the Australian market.

Wickramaratne will operate out of Airlanka's general sales agent's office in Sydney — World Association Systems (Aust) Pty Limited, 403, George Street, Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia. Telephone No. (02) 2391722. Telex AA 24577 CONT.



KUWAIT ... GULF

Thousands of prisoners released in Saudi Arabia

No more political prisoners: announcement

RIYADH, April 17 (AP): The interior minister announced yesterday that almost 8,000 prisoners have been released to mark the holy month of Ramadan, and claimed the kingdom had no more political prisoners.

The announcement said King Fahd, using the powers vested in him by Islamic laws, declared an amnesty for 7,681 prisoners convicted or held for crimes against public law on the occasion of Ramadan.

Denial

The sweeping gesture was made possible by benefactors who donated 327 million riyals (about \$87 million) to help write off the public and private debts of some

prisoners, the ministry said.

There was "not a single political prisoner" in the kingdom, said the announcement, which was broadcast by the state-run Riyadh Radio.

In a report on Saudi Arabia issued in January, the London-based human rights group Amnesty International said more than 700 people were detained without trial between 1983 and 1989.

The report said at least 100 were seized last year and named 66 held in three prisons.

Saudi Arabia denied the report.

Those still jailed were ones held for capital crimes or already convicted and

awaiting Islamic punishment, it said.

Capital crimes in Islam are murder, which is punishable by beheading, adultery punishable by stoning and thievery punishable by cutting off hands from the wrist. In recent years, beheading was also decreed by Muslim theologians for convicted drug smugglers.

Tradition

The amnesty covers both Saudis and foreigners, though no breakdown was released. It referred to an unspecified number of foreigners detained for various misdemeanours, financial crimes and public law violations, and said their embassies were asked to clear up their cases and prepare for their deportation, as is customary.

It is a tradition for rulers in Islamic countries to issue amnesties in Ramadan and on other Muslim occasions. Islamic law also makes it possible for benefactors, sometimes anonymous, to offer to settle public and private debts of prisoners, as an act of charity.

Neighbouring Gulf countries have already announced their amnesties for Ramadan, but the numbers of prisoners released have not exceeded 200.

The Saudi statement did not say who the benefactors were. In neighbouring United Arab Emirates, the President Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan himself underwrote the debt of the 150 prisoners he released in the capital city of Abu Dhabi.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Amiri cable

KUWAIT, April 17, (Kuna): His Highness the Amir sent a cable of congratulations yesterday to the Queen of Denmark Margaret II on the occasion of her country's National Day.

Premier's cable

KUWAIT, April 17, (Kuna): His Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Denmark Poul Schuler on the occasion of his country's National Day.

Premier receives

KUWAIT, April 17, (Kuna): His Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah yesterday granted an audience to Planning and acting Health Minister, Dr Abdul Rahman Al Awadhi, and heard chairman Ahmed Hamad Al Meshari.

Later, His Highness received members of the constituent national assembly and former deputies in part of his "national dialogue" meetings with citizens.

Earlier, Sheikh Saad received representatives of co-operative societies, non-profit agencies, trade unions, shareholding companies, the Olympic committee, sports clubs and federations as well as a group of private citizens and representatives of diwan-iyas.

Kuwaiti convoys

DAMASCUS, April 17, (Kuna): Sheikh Mubarak Al Faisal Al Sabah, representative at the diwan of Kuwaiti Crown Prince and Premier met here yesterday with Maj.-Gen. Mohammed Bashir Al Najjar, director of the Syrian customs department.

During the talks, the two officials discussed ways of facilitating the crossing of the first convoy of Kuwaiti aid to Lebanon, due to arrive the Dera border post, south of Syria, today.

Najjar also expressed the readiness of all Syrian border authorities to furnish the Kuwaiti convoy with all the services needed.

The convoy, comprising 20 trucks loaded with food and medicine, will be handed over to the Lebanese authorities at the border town of Masna' tomorrow.

Chinese minister

KUWAIT, April 17, (Kuna): Social Affairs and Labour Minister Sheikh Nasser Mohammed Al Ahmed Al Jabr met at his office yesterday with the Chinese Minister of Youth and Sports Wu Shao Zu, currently on a visit to the country.

The meeting, attended by chairman of the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahd Al Ahmed Al Sahah and China's ambassador to Kuwait discussed issues pertinent to the Asian Olympic Games, due to be held in China in September.

They also discussed bilateral relations and means of boosting them in the fields of youth and sports.

Test-tube camels

ABU DHABI, April 17, (Reuters): The world's first test-tube camels could be soon racing across the deserts of the United Arab Emirates.

Veterinarians at the Sheikh Khalifa Genetic Research Laboratory at the oasis of Al Ain in Abu Dhabi said they had fertilised in a test-tube an ovum from an ordinary camel with the sperm from a racing camel.

They said the conception was the first involving camels carried out in a test-tube. The fertilised egg was implanted in the womb of a breeding camel three days ago but it would be a year before it gave birth.

Lebanon support

KUWAIT, April 17, (Kuna): Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed yesterday reiterated Kuwait's support to the committee set up by the Arab League to pacify Lebanon.

Speaking to reporters, Sheikh Sabah expressed hope that sisterly countries and superpowers would boost the committee's efforts to achieve peace in war-ravaged Lebanon.



Scouts jamboree

Director of Hawalli Educational Area, Abdullah Al Rujaib opened the third Annual Scouts Jamboree for the area recently.

The technical scouts supervisor, Hassan Karam delivered a speech on the occasion followed by a number of activities and programmes.

Rujaib then distributed cups to winning scout teams. The jamboree included several scouts works. One of the exhibition corners was designated for former Kuwaiti Amirs.



228 state-owned units

Major hospitals to be leased to private sector

BAGHDAD, April 17, (AP): The government plans to lease out some of the major state-owned hospitals in a further move to privatise much of the state-owned economy and attract foreign investment for reconstruction, the Al-Itihad business weekly said yesterday.

It quoted a decree by the ruling Revolutionary Command Council stating that Health Minister Abdul-Salam Mohammed Saeed was authorised to lease for long periods major hospitals in Iraq to the private sector. The decree also permits the private sector to establish hospitals and other health facilities, previously a government monopoly.

The decree published in the business weekly 'Al-Itihad' authorised the minister to lease hospitals to private business men and doctors for a period of at least 25 years.

It also allowed private hospitals to set up their own price structure and provide a medical service with no state intervention.

President Saddam Hussein has privatised many government-owned enterprises since 1987, when he

launched a programme to loosen 20 years of tight socialist control to boost productivity, bolster the economy and stimulate private investment.

Mismanagement

Iraq has about 228 state-owned hospitals with 28,227 beds. There are 28 private clinics with 664 beds.

Service in the state-owned hospitals is generally poor and there have been complaints about mismanagement in the health sector.

Two health ministers have been dismissed over the last two years. Iraq has about 1,649 specialist physicians and 1,573 general practitioners, still well below the number of physicians under standards established by the World Health Organisation.

The country's elite is treated at Ibn Al Bitar Hospital in Baghdad, run by an Irish firm. A British nurse at the hospital, 43-year-old Daphne Parish was sentenced to 15 years in prison last month for acting as driver to Farzad Bazoft, a London-based journalist Iraq executed on spying charges.

Saudis deny Iranian accusation

RIYADH, April 17, (Kuna): The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia denied yesterday accusations reported in the Iranian press that Riyadh has consistently banned Iranian Muslims from performing the rites of pilgrimage.

An official source quoted by the Saudi Press Agency said the kingdom is ready to accept 45,000 Iranian pilgrims this year in accordance with the decision by the foreign ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Conference concerning quotas of pilgrims for each country.

The source added that Iran is the one that "refuses to accept the quota set for Iranians by the OIC," reiterating that the kingdom "rejects any means to destabilise its stand toward implementing this decision."

Pilgrims from Muslim countries, the source said, must abide by Islamic principles and teachings when performing important rites of Islam.

Full support for wheat farmers

THE director of botanic resources department at the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources Jasssem Al Bader said that the department is trying to offer all material and moral support to Kuwaiti farmers to cultivate wheat according to the Amiri desire. The period of the wheat cultivation experiment is three years.

Bader added that this is the second year for the experiment which is the first of its kind in the country. He added that the experiment cannot be evaluated before the end of the three year period, but indications of success are increasing.

The authority has set up a committee of experts to evaluate the produced wheat and compare it with other qualities of wheat in the world, Bader said. He added that farmers who responded to the appeals to cultivate wheat have increased beside the increase of the cultivated areas.

The evaluation of locally produced wheat of last year proved that the wheat was good and the percentage of protein high. But small stones in the wheat created a problem. This problem can be solved by increasing the awareness of farmers, Bader said. He added that the experiment will be successful if farmers abide by instructions. He also said experiments on Kuwaiti sand have shown that all kinds of vegetables can be cultivated.

The managing director of Agricultural Foodstuffs Products Company Khaled Al Usman commenting on the wheat experiment said that the company helped farmers cultivate about 6 hectares in the beginning which was productive. The area was increased to 10 hectares this year. The farms of the company are considered that highest in cultivating wheat among other farms. He added that experiment has achieved good success.

A farmer Salem Al Qahitani said he cultivated a part of his farm with wheat which provided an unexpected harvest. But he added that wheat needs special care like fertilisers and plenty of water beside protection from cold and humidity. He thanked the government for the guidance and support to farmers.

However he appealed to the state to increase the buying price of local wheat because this wheat is of the best quality. He added that the same quality of wheat is sold in Saudi farms for 2 riyals a kilo (160 fils) while Kuwaiti farmers sell it for 120 fils a kilo.

Veterinary clinics may open next year: Sultan

By Lima Al Khalafawi

Arab Times staff

AN official at the Animal Resources Department has denied receiving complaints about the behaviour of any veterinarian at any clinic. Dr Sultan Al Sultan, the deputy director-general of animal resources at the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources said that in case any complaint is received it is usually ascertained and dealt with seriously.

"Every one has the right to submit his/her complaint and the door is open in this respect," Sultan said.

On opening private vet clinics, the official said that concerned people have applied to open private clinics. Their applications are under study with the municipality and will be finalised by the end of this year.

He added that government clinics still provide this service which will be reduced after private clinics are opened for animals such as dogs, cats, fancy birds and others.

Replying to a question on specialised surgeries for pets such as for cataract, Sultan said that it requires expensive equipment, experts and special clinics. Priority is given to the productive sector of animals. However, under the law No. 32 of 1987 concerning the practice of veterinary medicine and auxiliary professions in Kuwait, private clinics are permitted to have such specialised facilities.

On stray animals, the official said that a project to eradicate stray dogs and cats is submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval. The project also includes research on diseases transmitted by animals.

On the lack of an information centre as a link between vets clinics here and others abroad, Sultan said that there is a continuous connection between the department and specialised vet centres abroad like FAO, OIE, Pirbright, Weybridge, Tropical Vet, and other experts visiting and conducting training courses for veterinarians here.

The official ruled out extending services to pets on a large scale. "The authority plan is to concentrate more on preventive, diagnostic and quarantine services, since these are the basic means for the development of livestock resources. Sultan concluded that services related to pets and fancy birds will be transferred to the private sector.

Etisalat profits

ABU DHABI, April 17 (Reuters): The United Arab Emirates telecommunications firm Etisalat reported a 17.5 per cent rise in net profits for 1989.

Etisalat said in a statement yesterday that profits rose to 787 million dirhams (\$214 million) from 669.9 million (\$182 million) in 1988.

He added that children's clothes shot up this year. "I cannot believe the reason behind selling a dress for 3-year-old child at KD70 in Al Muthanna complex," he said.

A ministry employee, Suliman Ca'dan said that he is hesitant to voice his complaints about higher prices of clothes to the concerned authorities, because he will get the same reply — "it is a free market — useless answer as usual," he said.

He added that children's clothes shot up this year. "I cannot believe the reason behind selling a dress for 3-year-old child at KD70 in Al Muthanna complex," he said.

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Redress commercial shortcomings: Khorafi

Ex-Moci official supports funds

THE commercial situation in the country leaves a lot to be desired and every effort must be made to redress the situation, the ex-undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Moci), Khaled Al Khorafi was quoted as saying in an interview with a local daily.

He expressed support for setting up the investment and real estate funds as they would provide new opportunities for investments.

Review

Replying to a question, the officials described the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) economic pact as the most important performance of the council. He confirmed the importance of providing job opportunities for national cadres in the industrial sector and for upgrading capabilities of the national industrial cadres.

Meanwhile, Khorafi called for reviewing all legislations concern-

ing economic affairs. He said that re-organising of commercial licences is an important issue. He pointed out that Shuwaikh Industrial Area has been illegally transferred into real estate investment area and suggested an organisational campaign for replanning the area in accordance with technical criteria.

The official also called for developing the industrial sector in the country and said that enhancing the performance of this sector would guarantee better economic factors. However, he said that boosting this sector should not be undertaken at the expense of other sectors such as financial, commercial and service sectors. He said that they have to deal with the industrial sector as a feeder for developing the national economy in order to enable the economy to be robust. Expanding the sector will create new job opportunities and will eventually absorb the veiled unemployment prevailing in the government sector.

Additionally, he said that industrial development will help realise technical development in different fields, including the commercial and service sectors.

Khorafi expressed satisfaction on setting up of the Public Authority for Industrialisation, provided the strategic objective and role of this authority towards industrial development are made clear. But he expressed reservation over the merger of industrial corporations and clarified that Kuwait is applying economic liberalism based mainly on individual initiative and this should be encouraged.

On the issue of mergers, the official said it depends on the quality of industries that intend to merge and the volume of the market.

He called for enacting necessary laws for protecting consumers and added that strict penalties must be made mandatory on manipulators who try to promote their goods through fraud.



Crowds of shoppers at the souk in Kuwait City.

Shoppers bemoan prices as Eid-Al-Fitr nears

Clothes and shoes dearer

By Lima Al Khalafawi

Arab Times staff

INCREASING activity is witnessed nowadays in shopping areas at Salmiya and Kuwait City before the coming of Eid-Al-Fitr.

A big rush after iftar starts at 7.30 pm every day and does not subside before 12 midnight. Many shoppers who seemed to be in a hurry are preparing themselves to buy their families' needs for Eid.

However, complaints of shoppers pierce one's ears while walking in Salmiya. Many people bemoan the high prices of clothes and shoes that shot up during Ramadan.

A lot of people attributed the rise in prices of many clothes to the merchants' greed for seeking higher profits while the consumer protection department is a complacent spectator.

A ministry employee, Suliman Ca'dan said that he is hesitant to voice his complaints about higher prices of clothes to the concerned authorities, because he will get the same reply — "it is a free market — useless answer as usual," he said.

He added that children's clothes shot up this year. "I cannot believe the reason behind selling a dress for 3-year-old child at KD70 in Al Muthanna complex," he said.

A father of four children, Aliya Jamal, said that the fever of prices that hit fruits and vegetables, has also been reflected in consumer items such as clothes.

Jamal added that people should unite and boycott those shops where prices are exorbitant. This will certainly force shop owners to reduce their prices, they said.

A housewife, Raja'a Mitwally, who was window shopping said that shoppers should avoid falling prey to high prices by buying all their needs at least a month before Ramadan.

"Prices of clothes and shoes soared on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan. This price fever will vanish when Eid-Al-Fitr is over," said M. Alawi, a bank employee.

Alawi said that shop owners are making at least 300 per cent profit from their sales in this period. The time limit urges many people to buy more because they cannot travel abroad for shopping especially those who have children in schools.

With a closer look at the prices now, one finds that prices of clothes for children (age category 2-9 years) ranges from KD20 to KD124. Prices of shoes for children of the age above, range from KD10 to KD43. These prices are now very common in Salmiya area, as discount on such consumer items is not favoured by shop owners.



Rqobah receives union members

Minister of Electricity and Water Dr Homoud Al Rqobah received in his office members of the board of the union of workers of the ministry. They discussed a number of proposals submitted by the union to improve the situation of workers at the ministry. Picture shows Rqobah in the centre.

Call to boost shipping

THE Arab Gulf Chambers of Commerce Union has called for boosting the role of Arab Gulf Marine Shipping companies towards transporting the region's imports.

In a study undertaken on shipping, the union suggested the forming of a union for Arab Gulf Importers to constitute a lobby in dealing with international shipping groups and to help stabilize shipping charges. The union called for setting up a new registration system in view of the importance to protect the interests of local importers.

The union further confirmed the importance of setting up a data centre to deal with different cases related to marine shipping in order to provide member states' importers with the necessary data about the shipping market.

FASHION IN SALMIYA

Ramadan Timings:

Saturday, Wednesday 10am - 4pm
8pm - 1am
Thursday, Friday 10am - 1am

Cosmetics promotions

- Clinique** - with every purchase of KD15, a free "Clinique pouch"
- Knowing, Beautiful** - V.I.P. samples for every purchase of Knowing, Beautiful
- Lancôme** - with every purchase of KD10, a free "Lancôme vanity case", with different skin care samples

- Rochas** - with every purchase of KD10 a free "Femme Purse"
- Elizabeth Arden, Montell, Decleor** - with every purchase of KD10, free gifts

- Givenchy, Lancaster, Fendi, Y.S.L., Stendhal** - free gifts of cosmetics sets, make up sets, lipsticks, Catherine Deneuve bags, Opium bags, body cream and many more with every purchase

Jews get green light to move into Nablus

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, April 17, (AP) Jewish activists charged yesterday that they were targets of "horrifying anti-Semitism" because their move into a building complex in occupied Jerusalem's Arab Christian quarter drew angry protests from residents, clergy and the mayor.

The 150-member group moved into a 12-room complex near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher under police guard last week. The activists are appealing an eviction order issued by a Jerusalem court on behalf of the building owner, the Greek Orthodox Church.

Also yesterday, Israeli legislator Dedi Zuckerman accused Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of exploiting the period of political uncertainty during the formation of a new government to step up Jewish settlement activity in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Shamir approved preparations for four more settlements and gave the green light for Jews to move into the West Bank city of Nablus and to enlarge the Jewish presence in the West Bank town of Hebron, Zuckerman told the Associated Press.

"Shamir is using the fact that he has nobody to argue with inside the government," said Zuckerman, referring to the left-leaning Labour Party, which wants to slow down the pace of settlements.

Labour ruled jointly with Shamir's right-wing Likud bloc, but left the coalition last month before toppling the government, said Zuckerman.

Shamir spokesman Yossi Ahimier refused to confirm or deny Zuckerman's charges. "Mr Zuckerman is the one who is acting against the national needs of our state, and I don't want to react to statements by this man," Ahimier told the AP.

Since capturing the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the 1967 Middle East war, Israel has built 143 settlements which are home to about 75,000 Jews. About 1.7 million Palestinians live in the occupied lands.

A Palestinian diplomat says a Palestinian-Soviet Jew dialogue will be conducted on Thursday and Friday in the Soviet capital, where mediators and politicians from both sides will participate.

Ambassador Nabil Amore, speaking exclusively to Kuwaiti daily, described the dialogue as an attempt to "listen and let others listen away from empty slogans and emotions."

A delegation of Arab foreign ministers will go to Moscow next month, before the US-Soviet summit, to voice their concern over the "mass emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel," an Arab League source said yesterday.

Vladimir Poliakov, Soviet vice-minister of foreign affairs in charge of the Near East, said the visit with Arab League Secretary-General Cheddi Kibbi, the source said.

A Muslim businessman said he offered \$7.5 million to 150 Jews who controversially settled in the Christian quarter of occupied Jerusalem's old city over Easter for their lease on the disputed property.

"We have problems and I say I have money," said occupied Jerusalem businessman Zakaria Julani, 48. "I don't want problems so I spoke to them (the settlers) on Saturday night and they said they'd give my proposal consideration."

Ethiopian rebels big offensive

NAIROBI, April 17, (Reuters) Rebels in northern Ethiopia said today they killed 872 government troops and captured Israeli-made radios as they infiltrated a new area of Shoa province last week.

A spokesman for the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) said rebel forces attacked Karakore on the main road north from Addis Ababa to Dessie, capital of Wollo province, last Thursday.

Spokesman Tewelde Gabru told Reuters by telephone from London that the TPLF and its allies attacked two brigades of army commandos in Karakore, killing 721 soldiers and capturing 351.

On Friday rebel forces attacked the nearby town of Degaga, killing 151 government troops and capturing 200.

Rebels also captured many weapons and, for the first time, Israeli-made Moterela long-distance radios, he said.

The reported seizure appeared to confirm reports that Israel has been supplying military equipment to Ethiopia since the two countries re-established diplomatic relations in November.

The report came as church groups in the capital announced convoys bearing emergency food relief for starving Ethiopians were moving further into war-torn areas following months spent negotiating arrangements with the government and rebel forces.

A convoy of 55 trucks carrying relief supplies left the Wollo city of Dessie, bound for the provincial capital of neighbouring Tigray province, Mekelle, 380 km (238 miles) further north, church spokesman said in Addis Ababa.

Seven other trucks, all fitted with long distance fuel tanks, will distribute food in outlying areas.

Three Ethiopian-based church groups were recently granted permission by both the government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front to distribute relief supplies in Wollo and Tigray provinces.

The TPLF claims to control northern Wollo and most of Tigray, and has in the past few months been distributing foreign-donated relief aid itself.

'Libya seized hostages'

Not by Abu Nidal group, says French newspaper

PARIS, April 17, (AP) The three hostages freed in Beirut last week were captured in 1986 by the Lebanese Navy, not by Palestinian commandos in 1987, as has been claimed, the prominent newspaper Le Monde reported yesterday.

Le Monde's home-page story, which gave no specific sources, endorsed suggestions made in other French publications last week as questions arose about the release of French woman Jacqueline Valente, her Belgian companion Fernand Houtekens and their daughter.

The report could increase pressure on the French government to reveal more details about the release, for which it ultimately thanked Libya's leader, Col Muammar Khaddafi.

Fatah Revolutionary Council, a Libyan-backed Palestinian faction headed by Abu Nidal, claimed in November 1987 that it had seized a yacht carrying suspected pro-Israeli spies in the Mediterranean between Cyprus and Lebanon.

Abu Nidal's group, who were freed in 1988, Houtekens, and four members of his family who are still held while Abu Nidal demands the release of a Palestinian prisoner in Belgium.

Le Monde said it appeared the boat actually was captured by the Libyan Navy in 1986 in waters between Malta and Libya's Gulf of Sidra. It said Khaddafi later decided to ask Abu Nidal's group to claim responsibility.



Iraq, Syria accord

Syria and Iraq have reached an accord on sharing the waters of the Euphrates, severing months after they protested to Turkey when it temporarily cut the flow of the vital waterway to full a giant dam.

It is a provisional accord on the sharing of Euphrates waters at the Syrian-Turkish border, pending the conclusion of a definite agreement between Turkey, Syria and Iraq, Syrian legal expert Mounir Amlal (shown left) told Reuters on Monday.

Ratification documents were exchanged by Amlal, who

is chief of the Syrian Ministry's legal department, and Hamud Alwan, an Al-Jazeera (shown right) Iraq ambassador in Tunis.

Syria and Iraq protested earlier this year when Turkey withheld upstream Euphrate waters for a month to fill the Ataturk Dam near the Syrian border.

Iraq and Syria, long-standing ideological foes, are ruled by rival factions of the Baath Party. Shown at center is Arab League General Secretary Chirki Kelbi (Paster wirephoto).

Arafat accuses US of backing Shamir

Bush, Baker praised

AMMAN, April 17, (AP) PLO chairman Yasser Arafat charged today that US officials had blocked attempts by Israel's Labour Party to form a government.

But the Palestine Liberation Organization leader praised US President George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker for "good intentions" in the region.

Arafat said Israeli Labour Party leader Shimon Peres "did not succeed in forming a government because there are some circles within the US administration which do not want Peres and instead they want (Yitzhak) Shamir," a reference to the leader of Israel's main right-wing party.

Arafat made the comments to reporters at Jordan's guest palace shortly after his arrival in Amman late Monday night.

"I know that President Bush and James Baker have good intentions," Arafat said.

But he said there were "certain circles within the administration which I do not want to name now" who advocate "endless support for the Israel to remain an occupier of our homeland."

Peres is trying to form a new Israeli government following the collapse of the coalition government led by Shamir, a dispute over efforts at peace with the Arabs.

Arafat said he will meet King Hussein, Prime Minister Mudar Badran and other officials to discuss the peace process and other issues.

He said the main topic would be the threat of Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel and the Israeli-occupied territories.

"We will discuss (Israeli) threats against our Arab national security and primarily the threats of the Soviet Jewish immigration not only against Palestine but also against the whole Arab nation," Arafat said.

He called on Arab leaders to meet soon to discuss "what can be done to face these threats."

Meanwhile, Sweden's Foreign Minister Sten Andersson arrived in Cairo yesterday for a meeting with Palestine Liberation Organization chairman Yasser Arafat to discuss how to facilitate establishment of a direct Palestinian-Israeli dialogue.

Andersson is also scheduled to meet his Egyptian counterpart, Hosni Mubarak, today for the same purpose before leaving for Tunisia.

The Sweden official told airport reporters that Arafat was expected momentarily but the PLO leader showed up late Monday in the Jordanian capital Amman.

Arafat's official spokesman, Bassam Abu-Sheikh, said Arafat met Andersson Sunday in the Tunisian island of Garbi but he cannot rule out a second meeting in Cairo.

Reached by phone as the PLO headquarters in the Tunisian capital Tunis, Abu-Sheikh told the Associated Press in Cairo that Arafat and Andersson discussed how to overcome the deadlock in the Middle East peace process and start Palestinian-Israeli talks in Cairo.

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Shiite rivals in street battle

BEIRUT, April 17, (AP) Shiite Muslim militia allies of Syria and Iran fought savage street battles in West Beirut today and rival Christian militia forces skirmished with automatic rifles in the city's eastern sector.

Police said at least two people were killed and 15 wounded in the early morning fighting between Hezbollah, and the Syrian-backed Amal.

Amal, in a communique, blamed the confrontation on Hezbollah, saying the party's zealots attacked its offices in the densely populated Bourj Abi-Haidar district at 4 am (0200 GMT) with hand grenades and machine guns.

"The aggression spread quickly to other districts of West Beirut," the Amal statement said.

It said the command of Syrian troops in charge of security in West Beirut was "informed of the hostile acts by Hezbollah. The Syrians promised to deploy patrols in the disputed districts to bring the situation under control."

Hezbollah blamed the escalation on Amal saying the clashes "reflected the bad intentions that the Amal leadership has against the Muslim mujahideen (holy fighters)."

Prime Minister Salim Hoss, a Sunni Muslim, pleaded with both factions to "stop fighting immediately and have mercy on the population."

Amal, in a statement, said it ordered its fighters to cease fire "unilaterally, in line with Premier Hoss' appeal."

Amal made the announcement at 10 am (0800 GMT). But a police spokesman said the fighting persisted despite the call.

He said the Syrians started deploying foot patrols in the disputed districts of Bourj Abi-Haidar, Nowairi and Ras El-Nabaa as of 9:15 am (0715 GMT), but the clashes persisted.

"Fighters of the two factions maintained their positions on rooftops and entrances to apartment buildings. They stop shooting when Syrian soldiers arrive, but resume clashes the moment the Syrian patrol leaves the area," the police spokesman said.

"It's a cat-and-mouse game," said the spokesman, who cannot be named in line with regulations.

The clashes broke out one day after unidentified assailants shot and killed Ali Abu Hassan, Amal's chief in West Beirut's Zouk Blat district.

Amal blamed Abu Hassan's killing on Hezbollah and its fighters carried out a series of house raids in West Beirut overnight capturing Hezbollah members in apparent revenge.

As the clashes raged in the narrow alleys of Bourj Abi-Haidar, the voice of the nation, the main Muslim radio station, broadcast repeated appeals from civilians for a ceasefire.

"They are fighting in our building. We have children here. Please, please ask the Syrians to intervene and stop this massacre," said Fatima Haidar in a telephone contact with Voice of the Nation.

Hezbollah and the more secular Amal have been fighting on and off for more than two years for dominance of the 1.2 million Shiites, the largest sect in a nation of four million people.

Meanwhile, troops of Gen. Michel Aoun and fighters of Samir Geagea's Lebanese Forces militia skirmished intermittently with automatic rifles in Christian East Beirut. No casualties were reported.



Looking for customers

Egyptian Hussein El Manawy, 17, wanders around the Giza pyramids hoping to find customers wanting donkey rides on Sharm El Nassim (smiling in breeze) spring feast on April 16. Each year thousands of Egyptians jam the pyramids area to celebrate the 7,000-year-old Pharaonic festival heralding the start of spring. But this year it coincided with the holy fasting month of Ramadan when Muslims remain without food or drink from dawn to dusk. (Reuters wirephoto)

MIDEAST BRIEFS

Egypt ambassador arrives

Egypt's new ambassador to Syria, the first since Damascus ruptured ties in 1977 over the Egyptian-Israeli peace negotiations, presented his credentials Monday.

Ambassador Mustapha Abdul-Aziz Mursi's credentials were accepted by the Syrian Foreign Minister, Farouk Al Sharara.

The official Syrian Arab News Agency said the two discussed means of improving relations between the two countries as well as developments in the Arab world. (AP)

Hekmatyar to mend split: Radical Afghan rebel leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar said on Monday he was talking with other rebel chiefs about mending a breach in their ranks.

He told reporters face-to-face and indirect talks had begun and said there was a chance of an accord on holding elections to a grand council or Shura of around 2,500 Afghans.

Hekmatyar walked out of his job as foreign minister of the Afghan Interim Government (AIG) based in Pakistan last August and has since fought a war of words with his former colleagues. (Reuters)

Seeks to avert Aden split: Ali Salem Al Beidh, leader of the ruling Yemeni Socialist Party, was locked in a closed-door session with the party's politburo Monday seeking to contain an emerging rift.

Al Beidh has in recent months opened up South Yemen, the Arab world's only avowedly Marxist state, in line with the reforming policies of Aden's conservative North Yemen. (AP)

Polisario rebels may resume war: Polisario's top guerrilla commander said on Monday fighting with Morocco could flare up again in the western Sahara at the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in 10 days.

Abraham Ghali, former defence minister of the Polisario's self-declared Sahrawi republic, said his forces might be forced to end a unilateral ceasefire because of what he called Morocco's intransigence. (Reuters)

Democracy in jeopardy: The Algerian government on Sunday night vowed to use the full power of the law to preserve public order and a nascent democracy, threatened by mounting labour and Muslim fundamentalist unrest.

An angry government statement said recent statements by the official labour union UGTA and the powerful opposition Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) were "dangerous deviations that threaten social stability and the emerging democracy."

The statement, reported by the Algerian news agency APS, came hours after the FIS announced a mass march on the presidential palace on Friday to press political demands, likely to include the dissolution of parliament.

The FIS is the main opposition challenger to the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) in June town and provincial elections-independence history.



Peace talks

Visiting Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Polyakov (right) on Monday told Arab League Secretary General Chadi Kibi (left), Moscow was intensifying contacts with the Arab world for activating the Middle East peace process.

The Soviet official told reporters after the meeting with the League's chief executive that he stressed to Kibi the Kremlin's belief that the peace process must cater to the interests of all parties concerned and to international law.

Arens puts off Bulgaria visit: Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens has postponed plans to visit Bulgaria to sign an agreement restoring diplomatic relations, the Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

Call to close Tunisia bars, hotels: Muslim fundamentalists say they would like to see Tunisia's hotels and bars closed down.

"A Muslim country should neither sell nor encourage the consumption of alcohol," Ali Laaridj, the leader of the Tunisian Islamic fundamentalist movement Nahdha, was quoted as saying in the newspaper Le Temps-Hcbdo. (Reuters)

Malaria cases up in Sudan: The lack of mosquito spray in Sudan has caused a sharp upsurge in the number of malaria cases, especially in camps near Khartoum housing people displaced by the long southern civil war.

Democracy in jeopardy

Algeria vows to get tough

ALGIERS, April 17, (Reuters) The Algerian government on Sunday night vowed to use the full power of the law to preserve public order and a nascent democracy, threatened by mounting labour and Muslim fundamentalist unrest.

An angry government statement said recent statements by the official labour union UGTA and the powerful opposition Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) were "dangerous deviations that threaten social stability and the emerging democracy."

The statement, reported by the Algerian news agency APS, came hours after the FIS announced a mass march on the presidential palace on Friday to press political demands, likely to include the dissolution of parliament.

The FIS is the main opposition challenger to the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) in June town and provincial elections-independence history.

Communists first meeting with Hussein

AMMAN, April 17, (Reuters)

Leaders of Jordan's Communist Party, enjoying a new era of political freedom, have had their first meeting with King Hussein in more than three decades, an official said yesterday.

Ya'qoub Zayadine, the party's secretary-general, told Reuters the two-hour meeting with the King on Sunday was their first since 1957, when the monarch banned all political parties after leftist groups tried to overthrow him.

"We had a very interesting and useful discussion," he said. Leading party members attended the meeting with the King, Crown Prince Hassan and Royal Court chief Sha'af Zeid Bin Shaker.

Jordan has not officially lifted the ban but allowed party leaders to run as individuals in November in the first nation-wide general parliamentary elections in 22 years.

Issa Mdanat represents the Communist Party in the new 80-seat lower house of Parliament.

EVENTS

Indian Video Roundup

Free they are not, free they won't be

By Fathima Ahmed
Arab Times staff

LIKE most Hindi films, Director S.A. Chandra Sekhar's *Azaad Desh Ke Ghar* (Slaves of a free nation) is all for freedom — of speech, action, inaction and reaction on screen. Off screen, Chandra Sekhar and the screenplay-writer chain themselves to clichéd formulas.

High doses of patriotism are injected in nearly all frames from the word go in the political-thriller, replete with trappings of mystery, idyllic locations, car chases and seedy characters. Thankfully, you don't get addicted to nationalism like Bharati (Rekha) and Vijay (Rishi Kapoor).

They feel strongly about everything from corruption and nepotism to rape and dowry deaths — and stand up against the ultimate criminals — traitors. Such rhetoric leads nowhere — not even to cinematic glory for the players of *Azaad Desh Ke Ghar*. Free they are not and free they won't be from

the clichés and formulas. Director Chandra Sekhar falls into the trap of flying to the moon before learning to walk. Consequently, *Azaad...* traverses familiar terrain ranging from drug smugglers to flesh traders and unscrupulous politicians selling their nation for a pot of gold.

Didactically, *Azaad...* reflects social decay, opportunism and treachery that has somehow become a fact of life. But as cinema, it doesn't work, simply because the director can't handle the bombardment of ideas.

In the first half, despite the overt preference for nationalism and rhetoric, we are engrossed with the loss of innocence and conflict of interests between father (Pran) and daughter, Bharati (Rekha).

Vijay's spying lands him in trouble and he is removed unceremoniously from the plot only to be resurrected with honours. At this point, the director says farewell to reason and meanders through a maze of ideas — the screenplay has no provision for the next step. It

seems the *Azaad...* team improvised characters and situations and plays truant with ideas as they went along for location shooting to Ooty.

Despite lifting a chunk of ideas from the recent mystery *Khoj*, Bharati's predicament — the poor girl can't stop pacing, be it in the saloon or prison cell — becomes a chronic problem.

One fatal disease comes in the shape of Mantri Narayan Das;

and even after the court has pronounced him guilty and sends him to the gallows, the by-product continues...and Bharati emerges victorious, with Inspector Jackie and Vijay to cheer on — and your smile vanishes...

Rekha as Bharati looks gorgeous — as always, but as her character stagnates after the first few reels, the actress looks like a fish without water. Rishi Kapoor, the baby-faced hero,

has brief cameo plays hide and seek with death before the final redemption. Jackie Shroff, with a song or two, also dances to the director's tune for the final climax: the public hanging — the punishment demanded for smugglers and traitors.

The above movie is by courtesy of Athari Video, Main St., Farwaniya, Tel: 4712900; and Canary Video, Fisheries Bldg., Sharq, Tel: 2459521.



Rekha



Rishi Kapoor



Jackie Shroff

TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

KTV 1

- 1.00 Opening and Holy Quran
- 1.15 The World Today via Satellite (repetition)
- 1.30 World Animals: cultural serial
- 2.00 Kabool Adventures: cartoon serial
- 2.30 Maa Al Sabreen: historical serial (part 23)
- 3.10 Human Health: cultural programme
- 3.35 Maraya 88: Arabic serial (part 7)
- 4.20 Rasael Al Ekha: local programme
- 4.40 Rafat Al Hajjan: Arabic serial (part 23)
- 5.30 Hadeeth Deen: Religious programme, presented by Sheikh Mohammed Metwalli Al Sharawi
- 6.20 Mazenger: Cartoon serial (part 23)
- 6.45 Baad Al Iftar: religious programme
- 7.00 Madeenat Al Ajayeb: local children's serial (part 23)
- 7.45 Night chemists, airlines and official advertisements
- 8.00 Maa Al Talaba: local programme prepared by the Ministry of Education School

- Activities Department
- 9.00 Juhayna: cultural programme (part 23)
- 9.45 Sawalef Min Al Madhi: local programme
- 10.00 News in Arabic
- 10.45 Lil Hayat Baqiya: local serial (part 7)
- 11.45 3x3: local variety programme
- 12.15 Layali Al Helmiya: Arabic serial (part 7)
- 1.15 Sabah Al Khir Ya Jari: Arabic serial, starring Sana Jameel, Omar Al Hariri, Mohammed Redha, Khayriya Ahmad
- 3.00 News summary
- 3.05 The World Today via Satellite
- 3.20 Holy Quran and Closedown

KTV 2

- 8.00 Opening announcement and Holy Quran
- 8.10 Mickey and Donald: A cartoon series for children
- 8.30 Animals of Africa: Cor-morants by the Thousand. A look at Cormorant birds with look similar to the sea gull but different in colour. They live in

groups on sea-shores and build their nests in curious places.

9.00 News in English

9.30 Welcome Ramadan: A religious programme on the occasion of Holy Ramadan

9.45 The Science Edition: Artificial limbs and new technology neon as revolution in the world of illumination... Communications via satellites and space TV stations... Blood transfer and its effects on human body

10.15 Booker. Brazing Arizona. A young teenager, Booker's friend, is involved with a criminal who orders him to sell drugs.

11.30 Cine Club presented by Farouk Abdulaziz "Adams Rib" Starring: Katherine Hepburn, Spencer Tracy

The marriage of a female lawyer and her husband is jeopardized during their courtroom battle involving woman on trial for shooting husband.

1.30 News in Brief

1.45 Magazine D'Actualite

CINEMA

- Al Andalus
- Rolling Vengeance
- Al Salmiyah
- The Survivorist
- Al Hama
- The Lost Platoon
- Drive-In
- Arabic film
- Al Firdos
- Sikka
- Fahad Open
- Kaum Jeeta? Kaum Hara?
- Fahad
- Arabic film
- Al Jahra
- The Untouchables
- Granada
- Arabic film
- Salaikhah
- Prime Risk
- Jeeb
- Midnight Run
- Ahmedi Drive-In
- Arabic film

PRAYERS

Israk	3.47
Fajr	3.57 am
Zohr	11.48
Asr	3.22 pm
Maghreb	6.16
Isha	7.36

A scratchproof showpiece

WITH the new Diastar 'Ultra', Rado has succeeded in the perfect return of a classic which counts as a milestone in recent watch history. The new edition of the popular watch with typical right-angled design is thinner, even more elegant, fully scratchproof and capacious with its excellent price-performance relationship.

Due to its timeless design, the Rado Diastar 'Ultra' did not need much facelift. But as regards materials Rado has added a number of improvements which make it into an almost indestructible piece of jewellery: crystal, case and newly also the colour-fast bracelet are made of scratchproof materials, sapphire crystal and titanium carbide.

The hardmetal case houses a high-precision Swiss quartz movement. The service-friendly, case-back facilitates access to the movement and ensures continuing water-resistance to 30 m, even after battery changes. With a striking profile, but 20 per cent thinner than before, the case, with integrated crown, merges smoothly into the bracelet. The lustrous hardmetal elements are held together by a reliable safety clasp.

The Rado Diastar 'Ultra' is uniquely available as a men's model, in the white or golden yellow versions with, respectively, three or four dial variations with date indication. As a further milestone in Rado's range of scratchproof watches, the classic with new lustre sets new standards of quality at an amazingly competitive price.



WHAT'S ON

ARTS

Kaleidoscope

A colourful spectrum of British and American 20th century music — including: Britten, Gershwin, Elgar, Copeland and Sandheim. Frances Coad - voice; Trevor Platt - piano. On April 18th at the British embassy. For more information Tel: 5318060 ext 19, 8 am - 1 pm.

Sultan Gallery

Furniture of Kuwait, pre-oil 1940s furniture, is currently on show at the Sultan Gallery; daily from 10 am to 12 noon and 8 to 10 pm.

From April 16, 1990, "The Mosques of Isfahan" exhibition will be shown at the gallery; it will be open daily from 10 am to 12 noon and 8 to 10 pm.

SOCIAL

Meeting about Islam

A public meeting will be held at Mohammad Nasir-Al-Hamad mosque in Hassawi area, beside Mohammad-Bin-Qassim Road, on 20th April 1990, after Friday Prayers. Professor Gohar Siddique from Pakistan, who is in Kuwait on the invitation of Ministry of Awaqaf and Religious Affairs, will address the meeting. All are cordially invited to attend the meeting to learn about Islam.

Turkish Embassy

April 23rd children's day. There will be a children's festival at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Auditorium hall under the auspices of Turkish Embassy on the occasion of National sovereignty and children's day on 23rd April 1990, at 8.00 pm. Turkish children and children from other communities will perform folkloric dances and songs on the occasion.

Entertainment City

Kuwait Entertainment City is running a free bus service from Kuwait City to the Entertainment city and back on Thursdays and Fridays throughout the month of Ramadan. The bus starts on both days from opposite the Meridian Hotel at 8.00 pm and returns back from the Entertainment City to the same stop at 12.00 midnight.

Career and Vocational Guidance

Goan Welfare Society will conduct a seminar on Career and Vocational Guidance on April 20, 1990 at 5 pm, at the Indian Embassy auditorium. All Goan students from standard IX, X, XI are invited to attend along with their parents.

Professionals will speak on specialised topics such as engineering, architecture, interior design, computer science, hotel management, banking and medicine. For further information please contact Bras Silveira on tel. 4849006 or Rudolph Fernandes tel. 2438011.

Kuwait Little Theatre

Kuwait Little Theatre are presenting a St. George's Day Revue on Thursday 19 April in the Unity Centre, Ahmadi, beginning at 7.30 pm (Please note the change of date to that previously advertised). Acts include Phil Thomas, June Woolston, The Kuwait Folk Group, and the Kuwait Singers. Tickets and tables can be booked by telephoning 3919759.

PAC postpone programme

We inform all our well-wishers that due to sudden demise of the father of our Secretary, Public Relations, our programme, scheduled for 27th April, has been postponed. The new date is being fixed and we hope "inshallah" to arrange a splendid programme during the month of May, 1990. All cards already issued are to be replaced by new one and we sincerely regret any inconvenience caused to our well-wishers and the registered families of PAC.

The fourth-coming programme to be held in a beautiful atmosphere of brotherhood and we shall invite all the association in Kuwait. The programme is designed to attract all literary and social circle. The first part of the programme will be an inauguration of a new book by Poet Hamid Kartarpuri, followed by a Mushaira of selected poets of Kuwait. The second part after a short break will comprise of variety of music and ghazals by prominent singers. For further details please contact Tel. Nos. 5323693, 4716258. S. Hamid Mahmoud, Secretary Public Relations.

British Council

The British Council working hours during the Holy month of Ramadan: General office — Saturday to Wednesday — 7.30 to 14.00; Library — Saturday to Wednesday — 9.00 to 12.30, 16.00 to 19.00; Thursday: 9.00 to 1.20.

Airline night

The airline staff launches its second annual get-together at Ramada Al Salam Hotel (Le-Mirage Grand ballroom) on Thursday the April 26, 1990. An evening with live music by top bands, fashion parade, etc. limited reservations. Please contact Celestino, tel. 2420631/2420661 or any staff on 5652073/2429277 (Cynthia).

Konkani Theatre

May 10-11: Goa's famous king of centuries, Rose Ferns and his 15-member troupe will present his new premier release Xinxo at 7 pm (May 10) and again at 4 pm (May 11) and another drama Biman Tum which is nearing the century mark at 10.30 am May 11 at Granada Cinema, Kheitan. Sit in AC comfort with stereo-sound and special light and sound effects. Plans open Sunday, April 15. Passes available at Raja Stores Tel 2412970, Tony 5655056, Wilson 3726038, Manuel/Rommel 4816836, Rocky 3924159, Val 5614506 and Alex Martins. An Expatriate Club presentation.

Black Is Beautiful

THURSDAY, MAY 3rd 1990: A tribute to Nelson Mandela titled "Black Is Beautiful" an Afro — Soul and Reggae concert featuring Steve Michael and The Afro Beat is scheduled at the Basketball stadium of the Al Arabi Sporting Club, Mansouriya, from 8 pm.

An airticket — Kuwait-Nairobi-Kuwait from Gulf Air, Electronic equipment from Sharp, a special offer from Showbiz etc are added attractions.

Limited tickets are now available on sale at: Showbiz: 5726729

Al Arabi Club: 2652726
Swan Lake Rec: 5721030
Art Corner: 2665068
Soft Rock Cafe: 2405648
Image Recording: 2405859
White House: 2476660
Family Book Shop: 571430
Modern Sports: 5748684

Daniella Dhow Trip

Daniella invites all Danes to go on a dhow trip on Friday, May 4. For registration please call Jytte on Tel: 2449610 before April 22.

Balsakhi di raat

Punjabi cultural society is celebrating "Balsakhi di raat" a harvest festival at Indian Arts Circle, Funaites on Thursday 19th April 1990 at 7.30 pm. For entry passes contact Tel. 5635089, 5628051, 5630897 and 5616287.

HOTELS

Kuwait International Hotel

LA PALMA: Opens at 6.00 pm for an elaborate Ifar buffet with traditional specialties of your choice. Desserts prepared by our Arabic pastry chef. One guest complimentary for each group of 6 persons. Ext 8166.

LA PATISSERIE: Opens for take-away treats at 5.00 pm and stays open for Subhour until 2.00 am. Live entertainment in the lobby sets the mood for the evening. Ext 8014.

OUTSIDE CATERING: Whether it is for you and your family or for friends and associates our outside catering facilities can cater to all your needs. Offers traditional Ifar buffet suggestions. Banquets will be pleased to assist: 2530000 ext 8008/8000.

Ramadan at Messilah Beach Hotel

AL MUBARAKIAH: Daily Ramadan Ifar Buffet, with a selection of fresh dishes, Kuwaiti and Middle Eastern specialties.

Ghabga & Sohour: Enjoy the daily fresh desserts and juices with the delightful sohaur buffet accompanied by soft Middle Eastern background music on the oud.

Kuwait Plaza

SPECIAL Ramadan Activities: Al Dallah coffee shop features authentic Ifar with sumptuous dishes, mezza, sweet, Ramadan drinks and a special buffet.

NOURA TERRACE: Surrounded by man-made waterfalls and green sceneries offers all kinds of light meals, juices, Ramadan drinks, bubbly-bubble and trick trail in an open air atmosphere. open from 8 pm until 2 am.

LOLOWAH CORNER:

Invites you to spend an evening out with your family. Enjoy all kinds of Kuwaiti and Arabic sweets with variety of delicious beverage and live entertainment. Open from sunset until 2 am.

Mughal Mahal

FIRST Indian restaurant to introduce Mughlai cuisine in Kuwait. Enjoy our specialties such as: Khandari Tikka Mal Mali Kebab, Navratan Briyani and lots more. Ramadan timings. Carry away pick ups from 5 pm onwards. Dine in from 6 pm to 2 am. Tel: 2425131/2.

SPORTS

Kuwait International Hotel

FIT FOR LIFE: Qualified Austrian masseur specialising in foot reflexology, acupuncture, athletic and relaxation massage available everyday.

Tennis clinics ongoing for all levels or play including junior, ladies' and adult sessions with Frank Novak, an experienced Canadian coach and tennis professional. Classes total 4 weeks in length and meet twice each week. Private coaching also available and fun tennis sessions for the family. Ladies' Keep Fit classes on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Look good, feel great! Ladies' sauna now offers a 50 per cent discount on the usual entrance fee. Ladies' Day on Saturdays and Tuesdays from 9 am to 9 pm. Austrian instructor for swimming lessons. Courses start first week of every month.

Yoga lessons

For fitness and slimming Kuwait International Hotel offers yoga lessons for ladies and men, every Sunday and Tuesday from 8.00 pm to 9.00 pm and on Friday from 10.30 am to 11.30 am. For more information contact Kuwait International's Recreation Department at 2530000 ext 8050 or Tanya at 5626529.

Hyderabad Sports Day

The committee for sports for celebration of 400th anniversary of Hyderabad (Deccan) is organising a sports day on 27th April 1990 (or next day of Eid) at Juleeb Al Shuwaikh ground (behind Juleeb Al Shuwaikh cinema). The schedule of programme is as follows:

9 to 12 am: Festival cricket



match for veterans.
12 to 2 pm: Break for prayer and lunch.
2 to 5 pm: Sports for ladies, children and agents.
5 to 6 pm: Formal inauguration of the festivities.

The events are open for all present and former residents of Hyderabad and their families. No entry fees will be charged. Festival cricket match is open for veterans above 40 years (relaxable to 35 years). All

veterans are requested to register their names with Dr. Naidu (Tel: 4842578). All Hyderabadis are requested to attend the sports day and inaugural function with families and friends in large numbers.


IMMUNAGE

FROM ELIZABETH ARDEN

Here is Immunage from Elizabeth Arden. It is the latest skincare product, the result of meticulous tests and research. Especially formulated to safeguard your skin from the harmful sun, Immunage is ideal for you. Our beauticians will advise you on its many advantages and also will offer you a free gift upon purchase of KD 10 and over. Welcome!

14/4 15/4 16/4 17/4 18/4 19/4 21/4 22/4 23/4 24/4 25/4	Sharq Co-op Sultan Center Beauty Corner Byblos Shifa Pharmacy Abdulla Al Salem Co-op Versailles (morning) Baydoon (evening) Faces Beauty Corner Shamiya Co-op Shifa Pharmacy	Qurtoba Elysees Bayan Co-op Sahara Center Samah Center - Salmiya Salmiya Co-op pharmacy Qurtoba Bayan Co-op Fashionway Samah Center - Hawalli Grand Stores / Fahadheel (morning) Samah Center / Salmiya (evening)
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ELIZABETH ARDEN

Agents:
W. J. Towell & Co.
Tel: 4738732/4748904

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Prices slump threatens government spending plan

DUBAI, April 17, (Reuters): A sudden slump in world oil prices threatens to derail the spending plan of wealthy Gulf governments, regional economists say.

Oil ministers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates met in Jeddah today to discuss the 30 per cent drop in the price of a barrel of oil since March.

These richest states can take some financial pain without much damage, but Iran and Iraq are already feeling the pinch and small oil producer Oman's cautious budget plans for 1990 now look wise, the economists said.

Any change in oil prices has an immediate impact in a region where oil revenues provide well over 50 per cent, and in some cases 90 per cent, of government revenues.

The slump is a nasty shock to governments which were hoping for price stability this year to guide their state-dominated economies into the 1990s, after devastation wrought by a price collapse in the mid-1980s to below \$10 a barrel.

Industry analysts expect world demand to rise later this year.

But oil industry managers say prices also depend on whether the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) cuts its current high output.

Analysts say total output by Opec's 13 members is probably running between 23.5 million and 24 million barrels per day, compared with its self-imposed quota limit of just over 22 million.

Riyadh has forecast 1990 government revenues from all sources of 1.8 million riyals (\$31.5 billion).

Independent economists said that to achieve that figure it would need to earn close to 90 million riyals (\$24 billion) from oil.

"If they just produced at their quota for the year, and the price of Arabian light crude was on average for the year around \$16.25/40 a barrel, they would get 90 million," said a Saudi-based economist.

Arabian light today was being quoted at only around \$13.85 a barrel.

A Reuters survey of oil industry sources estimates Saudi Arabia's first quarter output at an average 5.68 million barrels per day, against its Opec quota of 5.38 million.

Saudi Arabia says it does not want to reduce its share of total Opec output. That share has held steady at 24.46 per cent as Riyadh has raised its output to match rising total Opec output.

Analysts say lower prices per barrel can pay to a point but balance by higher output. But if production rises too far ahead of demand, the price can collapse.

Geman planned its 1990 budget on an estimate of \$15 per barrel, for its oil, a level that seemed pessimistic early this year.

Omani crude, however, was being quoted at just under \$15 per barrel this week.

Japan flight crews strike

TOKYO, April 17, (Reuters): Flight crews at Japan's two biggest airlines began a 24-hour strike today, halting many domestic flights but sparing international services, airline officials said.

Pilots and other cockpit staff at Japan Airlines and all Nippon Airways walked out after management wage offers failed to satisfy their union negotiators.

In late morning the JAL staff reached agreement on a 3.9 per cent wage increase, but continued their strike to protest company plans to introduce new plans that reduce the size of flight crews from three to two.

A spokesman for ANA said 312 domestic flights would have to be cancelled, inconveniencing more than 50,000 travellers.

"Even if the strike goes on for the full 24 hours, international flights will not be affected," he said.

JAL said union staff walked off all domestic and some international flights out of Tokyo's Narita and Haneda airports, but services were operating smoothly with senior administrative staff taking the place of strikers.

Qatar haggles with Japanese firm on LNG exports

DUBAI, April 17, (Reuters): Qatar and prospective Japanese customers for the liquefied natural gas (LNG) from its vast North Field are still haggling over the price of gas in a long-term supply agreement, Gulf oil industry sources say.

"The price issue is difficult, but it will be solved. Qatari authorities know that if it is not solved, the whole deal could collapse," a Gulf-based oil industry official said.

However, other analysts believe

Qatar General Petroleum Corporation (QGPC), which has started developing the world's biggest single natural gas field, might decide not to sell the gas if they think the price is too low.

"There is a school of thought in Qatar which would prefer to wait until the year 2000 for natural gas demand to increase, rather than to sell at a price which is not attractive to them now," one analyst said.

The sources said Qatar's plans to sell natural gas to its neighbours, especially

to Dubai and maybe to Oman and Kuwait, are still possible, but progress was slow due to costs of constructing pipelines and to uncertainty over the price of gas in the long term.

A team from QGPC had travelled to Japan last February to present the details of a plan to supply around six million tonnes per year of LNG for 20 years to three Japanese power companies. Another round of discussions with prospective buyers in Japan is planned for May, the sources said.

Japanese companies plan to use natural gas for power generation in the next few decades as it is a relatively clean source of energy.

But producers in the Pacific area can compete with Qatar on prices to Japan due to lower transportation costs.

The cost of the Qatar project is estimated at \$6 billion, including field development, gas plants and tankers. It would take up to five years to complete.

QGPC has a 70 per cent share in Qatargas, which was set up in 1984 to

market LNG. Other shareholders are British Petroleum, Total-CFP of France, Japan's Marubeni, and Mitsui and Company Ltd. all with 7.5 per cent each.

"Qatar is now evaluating the long-term LNG sales price in relation to what it can earn if it utilises the gas at home," an oil industry analyst said.

Natural gas from the first phase development of the North Field, which lies under shallow waters of the Gulf offshore Qatar, will start flowing next

year, but it will initially be used for domestic needs.

Qatar will use most of the 800 million cubic metres of gas to be produced in the first phase in power generation and desalination plants and to develop its existing and future local industries to diversify its economy.

It plans to expand its petrochemicals and fertilizer plants and sell gas to a planned aluminium smelter which will initially be set up without any Qatari financial participation.

Saudis appoint new governor for Opec

American oil prices rise

HOUSTON, April 17, (Reuters): US oil prices rose modestly in cautious trade ahead of a meeting of three Opec Gulf producers today in the Saudi Red Sea port of Jeddah.

May West Texas Intermediate crude oil rose a modest seven cents a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange to close at \$17.85 a barrel while unleaded gasoline futures jumped 1.66 cents to 60.21 cents a gallon for May delivery.

At the start of the month, May crude oil futures were trading around \$20.30, before tumbling to as low as \$16.25 a barrel on news of a glut in global crude inventories.

Traders and analysts attributed yesterday's modest rise to technical consolidation after last week's volatile sessions and quiet shortcovering on news

that key members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries - Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait - will meet today to discuss the current slide in world oil prices.

WTI dropped to a 14-month low of \$16.25 last week on a perception that markets were oversupplied as Opec oil production soared to 24 million barrels per day.

Cash markets were particularly quiet yesterday because the international petroleum exchange in London was closed for Easter Monday.

Analysts said players were buying unleaded gasoline futures on the Nymex against crude oil because gasoline affairs to be the only member of the energy complex that shows signs of improvement ahead of the US

summer driving season.

"Gasoline has a chance of sustaining itself in the short term," said Jayne Ball with New Century Resources in New York.

Unlike traditional futures contracts, traders of spread deals can profit from a rise in gasoline futures without tying up the same amount of capital and thereby reduce their risk.

Cash market traders said news those Opec producers would meet today inspired some market participants to cover short positions in case the group makes an announcement.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has appointed a senior government official to Opec's board of governors, replacing former Deputy Oil Minister Abdel-Aziz Al Turki, a Saudi official said yesterday.

Jardaneh to London for debt talks

AMMAN, April 17, (Reuters): Jordan's Finance Minister Basil Jardaneh left for London yesterday for debt rescheduling talks with banks grouped in the London Club of commercial creditors, an official said.

He gave no further details of the talks, due to open tomorrow.

Jardaneh said recently that Jordan expected to sign a long-delayed accord with commercial banks grouped in the club by mid-April, paving the way for new loans of up to \$50 million.

Banks involved in the deal have confirmed that prospects for the new money had improved.

In March, Jordan repaid the last part of London Club arrears of \$80 million originally due by the end of 1989, and plans to use any new money partly to cover 1990 interest due on loans.

The London Club steering committee agreed in November the fresh loans would carry interest at 13/16 point over Libor to be paid at the end of their three-year term, diplomats say.

Jordan, wrestling with an \$8 billion foreign debt, won IMF approval last week for its progress on a year-old economic reform plan, clearing the way for payment of the next tranche of a \$77 million standby credit.

Dollar climbs further

TOKYO, April 17, (Reuters): The yen finished weaker in Tokyo today, and currency jitters forced share prices down from their earlier highs to close little changed.

The dollar closed at 159.83 yen and 1.6816 West German marks after 159.32 yen and 1.6783 marks at the New York Monday close.

"The market had confidence in the dollar's strength, but was wary of central bank intervention," said Makoto Omori, vice president at Security Pacific National Bank.

The dollar gained on fresh buy orders in Tokyo but the upward thrust ran out of steam just before hitting the 160-yen resistance line, traders said.

The key 225-share Nikkei index eased a bare 1.58 points to 28,461.60 after tumbling 750.74 points yesterday.

The index had climbed as many as 350 points by midday, but the Easter holiday overseas and the ailing yen kept

trade thin, and thus added to volatility, brokers said.

"The general feeling in the market seems to be that the market has already bottomed out, but there is just no energy to sustain any gains," said Tetsuya Fukami, head of equities at Shearson Lehman Hutton Asia.

Turnover was a modest 400 million shares, up from yesterday's very thin 230 million.

Market players seemed to shrug off any possible good news in favour of the more constant bad news, Japan's March money supply data released today showed an annual rate of increase of 11.6 per cent compared to 11.8 per cent in February.

"The slight shrinkage as well as cheap oil prices could help quell inflationary worries, but investors are choosing to ignore potential positive signs now," said one foreign broker.

Tokyo shares			
Nikkei stock average	28461.60	Fanuc Ltd.	6940 -140
(-1.58)		Fuji Photo	4000 -60
Volume: 400 mil shs		Fujitsu Ltd.	1400 -40
Yen exchange rate: 159.83		Hitachi Credit	1390 -50
Name of stock	Q	Hitachi Koki	2120 0
Advantec Corp	5200 +100	Hitachi Ltd.	1560 -40
Ajinomoto	2030 0	Hitachi Metal	1290 -10
Alps Electric	2220 +10	Honda Motor	1780 -10
Amada	1470 +20	Ito Yokado Co	3800 -0
Asahi Chem Ind	847 -2	Kajima Corp	1600 +40
Asahi Glass	1700 +10	Kawasaki HI	780 +22
C. Itoh Co.	775 -3	Kobe Cast Iron	920 +20
Canon Inc.	1710 0	Kokusai Elec.	4930 -140
Casio Comp	1580 -20	Komatsu Ltd.	1020 -10
Dai Nippon Printing	2040 -40	Kyocera Corp	7220 -100
Daichi Seiyaku	2570 -30	Masui	2730 +10
Dainippon Pb	2530 +10	Matsushita Ind	3680 -60
Daiichi Kinu Corp	1630 0	Mat Electric	2110 -80
Eisai	1830 -60		
		Mazda MC	850 +31
		Mitsubishi Corp	1330 +20
		Mitsubishi Estate	1540 +0
		Mitsubishi HI	930 +30
		Mitsubishi	1700 -10
		Mitsubishi	1570 +10
		Mitsubishi	3780 -220
		Mitsubishi	3600 +130
		Mitsubishi	2080 -30
		Mitsubishi	1410 -50
		Mitsubishi	1010 0
		Mitsubishi	1590 +20
		Mitsubishi	546 +1
		Mitsubishi	1810 -70
		Mitsubishi	6380 -120
		Mitsubishi	1430 +20
		Mitsubishi	3920 -
		Mitsubishi	3840 -150
		Mitsubishi	1820 -30
		Mitsubishi	791 +11
		Mitsubishi	1020 -40
		Mitsubishi	2310 0
		Mitsubishi	991 8

Iran to invest \$5.71b

Plans to develop oil industry

TEHRAN, April 17, (Opecna): Iran plans to invest \$5.71 billion in the development of the National Petroleum Industry in the current five-year plan (1990-95), according to Deputy Oil Minister Ahmad Rahgozar.

In an interview published by a local magazine, he said \$1 billion would be allocated to the giant unfinished Bandar Khomeini petrochemical project, adding that various changes had been made in the venture, "including its original aims and plans." He did not elaborate.

He said half a million tons of the total production of the plant would be exported and the remaining 2.5 million tons would be set aside to meet domestic needs.

Giving details of the former joint Iran-Japan venture which suffered heavy damage during the war, Rahgozar said that after the Gulf ceasefire, the Japanese partners were invited to complete the work, but they were reluctant to do so. After discussions, the Japanese shares were acquired by Iran. The project would now be completed by Iran. It is said to have already cost over \$4.5 billion.

He said several foreign companies had been approached to take up the management and act as contractors or sub-contractors to conduct the actual implementation, but nothing was yet final. He hinted, however, that the decision was likely to be in favour of South Korea.

The deputy minister said that \$1 billion would be

earmarked for the semi-finished Arak petrochemical project which was expected to reach completion in 1992. Another half-built project, the Isfahan aromatic plant, would be given \$300 million to enable it to come onstream in 1991. The Tabriz petrochemical project would be allocated 900 million and built with foreign co-operation on a buy-back basis.

As to the feasibility of building so many petrochemical projects in the Gulf region, he pointed out that internal demand was very high and, therefore, the export aspect was of secondary importance.

Rahgozar said Iran could put a variety of petrochemical products on the world market. It was already exporting sulphur and ammonia to India, Morocco and Tunisia and would soon be in a position to export methanol, liquefied gas and fertilisers.

Rahgozar said lack of sufficient expertise and technical and management know-how was detrimental to any industry and Iran still had to obtain some essential know-how from abroad. A company had been set up in Shiraz for planning and engineering research and design.

"There is still a long way for us to go with regard to designing and building all the equipment we need," he added.

Rahgozar disclosed that seven out of nine of Iran's petrochemical plants were damaged during the Gulf war and production had fallen to half a million tons a year.

Lightweight battery invented

TOKYO, April 17, (Reuters): Japanese carmaker Isuzu Motors has invented a battery it says can be recharged in 10 seconds and produces 20 times more power for its weight than conventional batteries.

Isuzu and Fuji Electrochemical, which jointly announced the development yesterday, expect to start commercial sales of the battery in two years, a spokesman for Isuzu said today.

They have already produced a 1.2 volt, coin-sized version on a trial basis, he said.

The battery uses activated carbon and diluted sulphuric acid and should cause fewer environmental problems than mercury-based and other conventional types of battery, he said.

The new battery may be produced in different shapes and may be used in home appliances as well as cars, the spokesman said.

Isuzu Motors, which is 33.2 per cent owned by General Motors of the United States, is developing an electric car using the new battery, he said, adding that conventional car batteries generally need eight or more hours to recharge.

Isuzu developed the battery on its own initially, then jointly developed prototypes with Fuji Electrochemical, the spokesman said.

Isuzu shares were quoted on the Tokyo Stock Exchange today at bids of 720 yen \$4.50 each, after closing trade yesterday at 650 yen (\$4.06).

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Turkey finds oil

ANKARA, April 17, (Reuters): Turkey has struck oil in a new well near the southeastern town of Kahla, State Minister Mehmet Koceler said yesterday.

"The Turkish Petroleum Corporation (Tpsco) has found oil in a new well which will produce 1,200 barrels per day," Koceler told the opening session of a Turkish Petroleum Congress.

Turkey, which consumes 21.5 million tonnes of oil a year, produced 2.88 million tonnes of crude, mainly in the southeast area bordering Iran, Iraq and Syria, in 1989.

More than 2,000 people have been killed in the southeast since the Marxist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) launched its independence campaign six years ago. Kahla is outside the PKK's normal theatre of operations.

About 40 people have been reported killed so far this month in the most violent start to any year since 1984.

About 25 oil firms are currently operating in Turkey, most of them affiliates of foreign companies, including N.V. Turke Shell and Arco Turkey Inc.

Chevron International Ltd (Turkey) is likely to decide next month whether to go ahead with a \$10.5 million search for oil in the southeast near the Iraqi frontier, the sources said.

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Cautious economic revival amid scars of ethnic uprisings

Bush prods Congress to approve aid for Panama

WASHINGTON, April 17, (UPI): President Bush, trying to free a foreign policy priority from a legislative logjam, marked the approaching end of the congressional Easter recess Monday with a renewed call for passage of aid to Panama and Nicaragua.

"Nicaragua and of course Panama, too, need these funds," Bush told a gathering of business and other groups interested in Nicaraguan development. "With democracy at stake, there is simply no time for delay."

Before breaking for Easter early this month, Congress failed to meet an April 5 target date set by Bush for approval of \$800 million to help the new democratic governments of Panama and Nicaragua rebuild their ravaged economies.

Though the House approved \$420 million of the \$500 million Bush sought for Panama and the full \$300 million he requested for Nicaragua, Senate consideration of the package has bogged down in a sharp debate over foreign aid priorities.

A fight has been brewing in the Senate, where the foreign aid subcommittee headed by Sen. Patrick Leahy, Democrat of Vermont, may consider the administration request later this week.

Leahy has complained that the \$800 million gives undue importance to Panama and Nicaragua at the expense of emerging democracies in Eastern Europe. With foreign aid dollars in increasing demand around the world, Senate Democratic leader George Mitchell has said he wants Bush to submit a long-term plan before acting on the requests for Panama and Nicaragua.

Nine days away from the inauguration of Nicaraguan President-elect Violeta Chamorro, Bush reaffirmed the US commitment to respond in "Nicaragua's hour of need" and said "government aid alone cannot solve all the problems."

"The business of democracy-building is a task that requires strong and steady support from the private sector," he said in urging private investment to help repair an economy "slowly strangled by a system of central control and mismanagement."

The Nicaraguan economy is in a state of collapse from almost a decade of civil war between the US-backed Contra rebels and the outgoing Marxist-led Sandinista regime, its problems exacerbated by US sanctions.

Bush, however, said there is "a new sense of confidence in Nicaragua" that must be nurtured with US assistance.

A senior administration official, briefing reporters on the scheduled visit to the White House today by Honduran President Rafael Leonardo Callejas, also took time to try to prod Congress into action on the aid package.

"We think that it would be a very unfortunate message for Congress to send to Mrs. Chamorro not to have this on the president's desk by her (April 25) inauguration," the official said.

Exchange Rates

Indian rupee	17.080
Sri Lanka rupee	7.440
Pakistan rupee	13.660
Bangladesh taka	8.620
US dollar	29440
Pound sterling	4775
US dollar	0.011
Deutsche mark	17.520
Japanese yen	0.0149

Lanka's foreign investment surges

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, April 17, (AP): Tourists are returning to Sri Lanka's palm-fringed beaches and foreign investment is rising as this island nation cautiously climbs out of seven years of ethnic violence.

The foreign investment, bedrock of the island economy, is on the upswing with the apparent end of armed rebellions by Sinhalese nationalists and Tamil separatists.

And the return of the tourists to its Indian Ocean resorts has triggered hope of a rebound in the largest foreign exchange earning industry, which has been slumping after seasons of empty hotel rooms.

"There has been an economic turnaround," said Neelan Tiruchelvam, a lawyer and respected political analyst. "The balance of payments has improved considerably and the stock market is buoyant."

The Colombo Stock Exchange reported April 12 that its all-share index had reached 326, its highest level ever. The index has risen 154.5 points since the beginning of the year.

There were no official figures for the country's balance of payments, which reached a staggering 5.8 billion rupee (\$146.2 million) deficit for the first six months of 1989.

But Tiruchelvam said the deficit had been curtailed by increased remittances from Sri Lankans working abroad, better trade and an increase in the prices of tea, one of the country's principal exports.

Last year, an uprising by Sinhalese extremists derailed the country's economy. Officials and diplomats agreed privately that the government of President Ranasinghe Premadasa was close to being overthrown before a wave of reprisal killings crushed the

militants.

The government said strikes and attacks on economic targets by militants of the pro-Sinhalese People's Liberation Front cost Sri Lanka at least 14 billion rupees (\$350 million), or 5.5 percent of its gross domestic product.

The North and East of the nation, dominated by the Tamil minority, appears to be shrugging off the effects of a seven-year war for independence by Tamil rebels.

The militants and the government agreed to a ceasefire last summer, and the guerrillas almost immediately began speaking of plans to put the region's mostly agricultural economy back on its feet.

Revenue was lost because the rebellions frightened off tourists and investors.

"We were beginning to worry," said Terrence S. Coldham, managing direc-

tor of Nunan Sapphire Ltd., an Australian mining firm that is setting up a sapphire processing plant with an investment of \$455,000.

"Our commitment in Sri Lanka hadn't changed either way, but we were afraid we wouldn't succeed," he said.

But now, Coldham said, the situation on the island has undergone a vast change. "The improvement in the whole country is fantastic," he said. "It's in the air. Even the streets are cleaner."

"We get about 20 inquiries a day," said Bandula Fernando, a senior executive in the greater Colombo Economic Commission, the regulatory body for foreign investment in Sri Lanka. "Of course, very few translate into projects, but the interest is tremendous."

Fernando said the major attractions for a foreign investor were the low cost

of labour, the wide use of English and Sri Lanka's location on major sea routes linking southeast Asia with the West.

"Ultimately the investor decides on his balance sheet, so we are trying to give him all the incentives we can," he said.

The government last December announced an industrial policy designed to re-establish and maintain the rapid economic growth registered between 1977, when the country discarded socialism for a more market-responsive economy, until 1983, when the ethnic violence began.

The government measures included continuing a flexible rate of exchange, tax deferrals for most projects, and incentives for market promotion, research and development.

Meanwhile, the Tourism department said there were 52,960 visitors in the

first three months of 1990, up more than double from the same period last year.

In all of 1989, 184,732 tourists visited the sun-drenched tropical island and pumped in about \$80 million, according to the department's records. The 1989 arrivals were about 50 per cent for the annual figures before the troubles began.

"The government really has no choice," said a Sri Lankan diplomat who previously was an executive of the government's foreign investment board.

"The only way to stay onestep ahead of ethnic troubles is creating enough wealth to share," he said, speaking on condition of not being identified further. "The wars really spring from socio-economic problems. Boosting the economy will stave off any resurgence."

Economic reforms likely to result in steep price hikes

Soviets consider 55 pc business tax

MOSCOW, April 17, (UPI): Supreme Soviet deputies reacted harshly Monday to a government proposal for a 55 per cent tax on all state and co-operative businesses as part of the country's economic reforms.

Economist Viktor Yaroshenko, a member of the parliamentary body, called the tax proposal "confiscational in nature" and said it would derail President Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika reforms by eliminating incentives for enterprises to make money.

Government officials have said in the past a high tax on enterprises would be part of the economic reform package, but Monday's debate was the first on a specific proposal.

Yaroshenko, one of dozens of

deputies opposing the proposal in debate Monday, said a 55 per cent tax was "not consistent with the aim proclaimed by the government—to accelerate the transition to a market-oriented economy."

He proposed a maximum tax of 35 per cent. Both his proposal and the government's would tax all businesses, both state enterprises and semi-private co-operatives, at the same rate.

Soviet Finance Minister Valentin Pavlov argued that if businesses were taxed at less than 55 per cent, the government would not have enough money for major social programmes that have already been approved by the Supreme Soviet.

The government is also worried about how to deal with a

budget deficit, estimated last year at \$192 billion at the inflated official rate.

Pavlov said a lower tax would also result in enterprises having more money and mean higher wages without increased production, thereby boosting inflation.

Soviet officials have warned in the last several weeks that the economic reforms are likely to result in steep price hikes if the market is allowed to set prices.

Under the current system, prices generally have no relation to cost of production or demand because they are artificially set by government ministries. Food subsidies alone take up 15 per cent of the budget.

Gorbachev's Presidential Council and Federation Council have been meeting during the

past week to discuss a total overhaul of the country's price structure.

The debate on the tax proposal was adjourned until Wednesday. Meanwhile, a senior Soviet lawmaker said up to 70 per cent of state-owned industries will soon be leased to work collectives or individual owners and 70 per cent of the prices will be set by the market.

Pavel Bunich, deputy chairman of the Soviet Parliamentary Committee on Economic Reform, urged quick reforms but said Thursday he did not want the kind of "shock treatment" of rapid price hikes and high unemployment that Poland is experiencing and which has been predicted for the Soviet Union as well.

Chase profits plummet

J.P. Morgan's up

NEW YORK, April 17, (UPI): The Chase Manhattan Corp. said yesterday its profits dropped to \$44 million, just 20 cents a share in the first quarter, down 67 per cent from earnings of \$132 million of \$1.27 a share in the year-previous quarter, mainly because of rising losses on commercial real estate loans.

J.P. Morgan & Co., meanwhile, reported net income of \$399 million or \$2.09 a share, up strongly from earnings of \$180 million or 96 cents in the year-ago quarter. Much of the increase derived from a new accounting method in listing gains on interest rate and currency swaps, it said.

Manufacturers Hanover Corp., another New York money centre bank, said it had first quarter profits of \$96 million in the year-ago period. Non-interest income in the year-ago quarter. Net income per share was \$1.21, compared to \$1.84 a share in the year-previous quarter.

Chase added \$225 in loan loss reserves, against \$190 million in the year-ago period, citing "deterioration... in certain domestic commercial real estate markets." It wrote off \$325 in loans in the quarter, against \$159 million in the year-ago period.

Chase warned that, "If economic conditions in domestic commercial real estate markets deteriorate further, it is likely that the provision for possible credit losses will continue at relatively high levels."

Net interest income was \$814 million, off from \$829 million in the year-ago period. Non-interest income, mainly fees and trading profits — rose to \$468 million, compared to \$420 million in the year-ago quarter.

Operating costs rose \$76 million from the year-ago quarter to \$952 million, partly reflecting new credit card portfolio acquisitions.

Of loan charge-offs in the quarter, \$100 million stemmed from an exchange of \$1.1 billion in Mexican debt for debt reduction bonds under the US-backed Mexican debt reduction deal concluded this year.

Chase listed nonperforming domestic loans — those on which neither interest nor principal payments were being made — at \$1.67 billion compared to \$1.25 billion at the end of the year-ago quarter. Of that, \$884 million was in real estate loans, up 38 per cent from \$661 million a year earlier.

Morgan chairman Dennis Weatherstone voiced satisfaction with the results. His bank lost \$1.28 billion in 1989, largely because of a \$2 billion third-quarter addition to Third World loan-loss reserves.

Morgan's portfolio of nonperforming loans shrank to \$1.09 billion at the end of the first quarter from \$1.97 billion a year before. Nonperforming loans other than developing nations stood at \$154 million, against \$263 million. Morgan added \$10 million to reserves in both quarters.

"We are pleased with the strong trading results and the continued growth of business activities with relatively steady revenue streams, such as investment management and operational services," he said. Weatherstone said corporate finance fees declined as economic activity slowed.

Morgan said the accounting change on swaps added \$230 million after taxes to profits. It said the new method, taking longstanding profits, "conforms with the practices prevalent among other financial institutions."

Under the modification, "net interest revenue from trading swap results are determined on a market value basis and classified as other trading revenue."

Swaps, arrangements under which a credit facility or currency may be borrowed or lent for an agreed-upon fee, allow finance and treasury officers to minimise interest income of \$266 million, against \$299 million in the year-previous quarter, and non-interest income of \$716 million, up from \$683 million such profits in the year-ago quarter.

Operating expenses rose 11 per cent to \$485 million, against \$436 million in the year-previous quarter. The rise included a 7 per cent hike in salaries and expenses, and costs of occupying a new headquarters building.

Manufacturers Hanover reported interest income of \$373 million in the first quarter, against \$362 million in the year-ago quarter. It added \$73 million in loan-loss reserves, against \$87 million in the year-ago quarter.

It had quarterly noninterest income of \$326 million, compared to \$319 million in the year-earlier quarter. Manufacturers said.

Syndicate to give loan to Delhi

TOKYO, April 17, (UPI): An international group of 11 banks has agreed to extend a \$50 million loan to the Industrial Credit and Investment Corp. of India, a Japanese partner said today.

The Industrial Bank of Japan said the group includes nine Japanese banks, Italy's Istituto Bancario San Paolo Di Torino and KDB International Ltd of South Korea.

The loan is repayable over eight years, including a four-year grace period, at an annual interest rate set at the London interbank offered rate of 8.625 per cent plus a spread of 0.25 per cent.

Meanwhile, Japan has agreed to grant Indonesia a total of 3.164 billion yen (\$20.4 million) to finance agricultural, medical and other projects in the country, the foreign ministry has announced.

The ministry said 1.7 billion yen (\$11 million) will be used for the purchase of fertilizer, agricultural chemicals and machinery to increase food production as part of the country's fifth five-year plan.

The ministry said 500 million yen (\$3.2 million) will be set aside for the purchase of equipment to control malaria.



First Sony shop opens in Belgrade

Akio Morita chairman of the Sony Corporation with his wife at the opening ceremony of the first Sony shop in Belgrade. Morita also met with Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic during his two day business visit to Yugoslavia. (Reuters wirephoto)

Investment in US lauded

WASHINGTON, April 17, (UPI): Japanese automobile manufacturing in the United States is creating a more competitive marketplace, more jobs for American workers and a lower trade deficit, a study funded by the Automobile Importers of America Inc. said Monday.

With Japanese direct investment in US auto manufacturing in the 1980s, "the US auto industry has been transformed from a three-firm oligopoly into a more competitive market, with many producers," according to the study by Robert Z. Lawrence, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution think tank.

The report contended that so-called Japanese "transplant" factories and US automakers' response to them "have allowed the recovery of competitiveness in an industry in which it had seriously eroded."

The study noted that foreign direct investment in the US vehicle industry has helped to lower America's trade shortfall by providing the US market with Japanese-brand vehicles that otherwise would have been imported.

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Can American carmakers ever catch up to Japan?

DETROIT, April 17, (UPI): Not long ago, America's big three automakers left by the roadside a chance to debate whether their cars are as good as those built by their Asian counterparts.

That evening, Lee Iacocca was to appear on ABC television's "Nightline" show on competition between the United States and Japanese auto industry. But the outspoken Chrysler Corp. chairman, now on a six-city tour to convince Americans that Chrysler cars are just as good as Japanese models, was not seen.

Iacocca's request to appear live in the studio was denied by the show's producers, who said it would give him an advantage over other guests linked electronically from other locations.

So those who stayed up to watch "Nightline" that evening were left with the common perception that while American cars have improved in quality, Japan still is way out in front by giving buyers what they want.

And those impressions were largely reinforced because top

executives of Toyota's and Honda's US operations stepped in and monopolised the show, with virtually no counterattack from Detroit.

So much for "Advantage: Chrysler," which happens to be the No. 3 carmaker's latest advertising theme.

"Everything from Japan is perfect, everything from America is lousy," Iacocca is heard telling his management team in those ads. "The truth is we've got advantages over the Japanese in every car we make, but nobody knows it. And that's going to change."

Many consumers are convinced the Asians already have obliterated the competition from any Detroit automaker in some parts of the US car market.

The numbers show it. Cars built by Japanese and South Korean automakers both here and abroad took 27.3 per cent of the US car market last year, up from 25.3 per cent in 1988 and 22 per cent in 1986.

Much of the gain was in the

large compact sedan market, where Honda's Accord was the top-selling nameplate last year — a first for a Japanese automaker, although the Accord is domestically built.

"That is where we have the biggest disadvantage," said one Ford Motor Co. product planner, who conceded Ford will not be truly competitive in the compact sedan market until it comes out with a new Tempo and Topaz for 1994 — cars now being designed by Ford of Europe.

In the sports coupe market, the Mitsubishi Eclipse outsold the Plymouth Laser by nearly 22 per cent last month despite the Plymouth being offered at five times as many US dealerships as the Mitsubishi version.

This is particularly telling since the Eclipse and Laser are virtually identical cars built on the same assembly line at an Illinois assembly plant jointly owned by Chrysler and Mitsubishi.

Industry executives and analysts generally agree many buyers still think Japanese cars

are better built, more competitively priced, and able to hold their resale value longer than American models.

But some of that may simply be perception lagging reality. "The car has become something like wheat in that it's a commodity grown around the world," said Arvid Jouppe, an industry analyst and founder of the Detroit automotive roundtable. "You can make chocolate eclairs or spaghetti from wheat — in other words, make it into any level of taste or preference."

Here is how experts now rank Japanese and American cars in various categories: Quality — advantage Japanese.

Widespread reports about the abysmal quality of American cars during the early 1980s created fertile ground for the Japanese to prove their mettle and make tremendous inroads into Detroit's domain.

But US automakers insist that expected quality gains during the next several years will negate any advantage held by the Asians.

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China strictly applies one-child rule to curb population growth

War against 'enemies in the womb'

BEIJING, (Reuters): China, worried by predictions of a record baby boom, is to put fresh effort into its fountaining one-child-family campaign.

"Now we are facing the biggest boom ever in the numbers of women of child-bearing age," said Shen Guoxiang, director of publicity at the State Family Planning Commission.

He said a national meeting on birth control in February had decreed that education and propaganda be intensified to encourage the one-child family.

Western nations have repeatedly condemned China's one-child policy as draconian and inhumane.

"China is different," Shen told Reuters in a recent interview.

"If America had 1.1 billion people then they would not be so concerned about this humanitarianism they talk about."

China is the world's most populous nation, where about one fifth of mankind live off about seven per cent of the world's total arable land.

The expected baby boom is a consequence of unchecked procreation under the rule of the late Chairman Mao Tse-tung, who once called birth control

"bloodless genocide." In the 1950s Mao said people birth control was a plot hatched by China's enemies.

Only after Mao's death in 1976 were widespread population curbs introduced to limit the uniform of extra mouths eating away at China's economic gains.

In the year 2000 there will be 340 million women in China capable of having children, up 35 million from last year's figure. The increase in women of child-bearing age, twice as fast as during two previous population explosions, will peak between now and 1992.

China will overshoot its target of 1.2 billion people in the year 2000, unless policies are strictly enforced, official press reports say.

Fines, persuasion, education and outright bans are China's main weapons against what some Western commentators have called "enemies in the womb."

Rewards of money or land and praise are given to couples who vow to have only one child and extra cash is handed to those who prove their fervour by opting for sterilisation.

This year's campaign aims to instil zeal into local officials to enforce the punish-

ments and rewards, educate couples on the benefits of small families and persuade women to abort unauthorised babies.

It will be targeted mainly at rural areas where officials have winked at as many as three children in a family, after attempts to enforce the one-child rule led to the widespread murder of baby girls.

Sons are prized in the countryside as future breadwinners and inheritors of an ancient belief in ancestor worship. A family with no sons is a disgrace to its forebears.

"The problem is ignorance," said Shen. "Many people in the countryside just do not understand that it is for their own good and the benefit of China to have fewer children and best to have one."

The one-child rule will not be as rigidly enforced in rural areas as it is in cities, but statistics must show an improvement from a current average of 2.8 babies per rural family and 40 per cent of births being outside the state plan, said Shen.

He said local officials have much autonomy in devising punishments for couples who have too many children.

"Normally the women are willing to abort," said Shen. "But if they are not then

the local cadres come round to persuade them a little."

For every two babies born in China last year, one was aborted, said Shen. The time limit for abortions was normally three months into the pregnancy but some "stubborn" women resisted persuasion at first and had to have the foetus removed in its fourth month or later, he said.

Fines for offenders were normally about 10 per cent of wages for 10 years but could be increased according to "local conditions," Shen said. Reports of much larger amounts are widespread.

Two Chinese provinces, Gansu and Liaoning, have banned mentally retarded parents from having children and ordered sterilisations to "improve the quality of the population," official newspapers have reported.

Family planning among China's national minorities will be strengthened, Shen said, but with exceptions.

"There will be no family planning propaganda in Tibet because the situation there is sensitive," he said.

Pro-independence demonstrations have flared several times in the Himalayan region ruled by China and its capital Lhasa is still under martial law.

Mystery

The manor of a hundred spooks

The peaceful surrounding of Borley Rectory gave little indication of the frights that hid inside its walls. But vicars, investigating psychic and passersby have all experienced its chills... even after it burned down.

By Marcus Blake

IT was called The Most Haunted House in England — and it certainly deserved the reputation.

Almost since the time it was built, in 1863, a startling variety of ghostly happenings in Borley Rectory have terrified occupants of the rambling Victorian residence.

And in some cases, the experiences have left them physically injured.

Even after it burned down on the night of Feb 27, 1939 Borley's ghosts were regularly reported, and are still seen today.

Ronald Russell, one of Britain's top ghost-hunters says: "Many people find the site oppressive and cold and claim of experiencing various chilling phenomena. In particular though, it is the ghost of a nun, said to have been murdered 700 years ago, which is seen most. A phantom coach and horses is also often reported."

And, when the rectory was destroyed by fire, some of its ghosts apparently moved to the nearby church. But nothing prepared Ronald Russell for the amazing results he achieved when he left sensitive recording equipment inside it one night with all entrances securely locked.

"When we played back the recording there were inexplicable sounds on it," adds the ghost-hunter. "There was a loud crash, as if some large metal object had been thrown to the ground, the sound of tearing paper and most chilling of all, a humanoid grunt that must have been made close to the microphone."

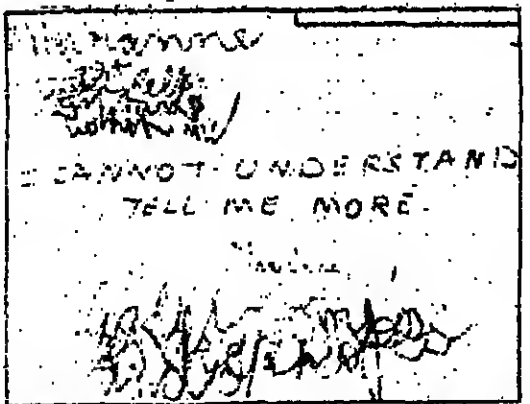
Borley Rectory was built by a former vicar of the parish, the Reverend Harry Bull, on the site of a previous rectory. According to local tradition a monastery stood there before that. It was said to be an ugly red-brick monstrosity and hardly added charm to the little Essex village.

The vicar and his wife had 14 children and it seems they all soon grew used to mysterious occurrences in their home which varied from eerie footsteps, the sound of tinkling bells in empty rooms and unexplained apparitions, including the phantom nun.

The date of July 28 became a



Bad omen. The gutted ruin of creepy Borley Rectory, dubbed The Most Haunted House in Britain.



Message: Samples of the mysterious 'writings on the wall' which suddenly appeared at Borley Rectory.

particular time for expecting the nun to appear, usually gliding across the lawn over a path that is now known as the "Nun's Walk."

It is said that it is that day, around 700 years ago, when the nun was horribly put to death after a love affair with a monk. The pair had tried to elope by horse-drawn coach but were pursued and caught. The monk was hanged and the nun was walled up in a tiny room in her nearby convent to die a lingering death.

The succession of vicars and their families who followed the Bulls in occupying Borley Rectory all became convinced the place was haunted.

But it was not until the Reverend Guy Smith lived there in 1929, that Borley hit the headlines and became famous. The vicar wrote to a national newspaper, describing the frightening phenomena he and his family had experienced and asked for help. The newspaper recruited Harry Price, a famous psychic investigator of the time, to look into it.

He found that the Reverend Smith and his wife were "intelligent, much-travelled and sceptical people," yet they insisted Borley was plagued with terrifying inexplicable noises. Among their complaints were



Ghostbusters. A BBC film crew go on the hunt for spooks at Borley Rectory. They found plenty of evidence of supernatural activity.

hair-raising whisperings close to their ears and the sound of a woman crying and dragging her footsteps.

Ghostly lights went on and off in empty rooms, objects would disappear to be found later in unexpected places, the phantom nun was a regular occurrence and a maid had seen the coach and horses dash across the lawn before disappearing into thin air.

It was not long before Harry Price was experiencing Borley's

hauntings for himself. Indeed, it seems the ghosts of the rectory went out of their way to prove their existence to the investigator.

Soon after his arrival, he watched to his astonishment a glass candlestick float down the stairs and smash itself at his feet!

As he watched, keys jumped unaided out of their locks, servant bells rang without being touched and — more painfully — stones and pieces of slate would



Impressed. Famous psychic investigator Harry Price was called into unravel the scary happenings at Borley Rectory by the Reverend Guy Smith. He too experienced the house's noises.

be thrown by unseen hands.

When Price's reports were published Borley Rectory became one of Britain's most celebrated haunted sites. Crowds of sightseers flocked to the village, breaking down hedges for a view of the house and trampling over the lawn.

Not surprisingly, within a month the vicar and his family moved out. The rectory remained empty for 18 months and gradually it failed to make front-page news.

Then, remarkably, the church authorities persuaded another parson, the Reverend Lionel Foyster, and his wife Marianne to move in.

And as if making up for lost time, the Borley ghosts soon set to work on the new occupants. But now they were more violent. Marianne Foyster was pushed in the eye by a phantom fist and hit by a flying door-knob. The vicar was painfully awakened one night by a blow to the head from a hairbrush held in an unseen hand.

Yet, they stayed put, recording every paranormal occurrence they experienced. After 15 months they had noted more than 2,000 such incidents. Some were just simply irritating ghostly "practical jokes." Mrs Foyster's best teapot, for instance, was constantly disappearing and re-appearing.

Just once the ghosts actually performed a good deed when they deposited a stack of hymn books from some unknown source on the kitchen floor. As the Borley Church was short of them, they came in handy!

But chilling messages such as "Marianne — help me," found scratched on walls, and inexplicable small fires in the building, eventually forced the Foysters to attempt an exorcism.

With the assistance of a fellow clergyman, Lionel Foyster moved from room to room in the house, sprinkling holy water and chanting prayers. But far from driving out the ghosts it seemed to make them angry.



The 'magic fingers' probe my shoulder blades for signs of ill-health.

Cured by a 'magic touch' invented by the Egyptians...

AS I lay naked, face down on a couch, Annick Laboure gently applied pressure to my spine and murmured: "This will cure anything from asthma to arthritis."

Her nimble fingers probed my back and muscles with a magic touch that Annick believes has been passed down from the days of the Pharaohs.

For £15 a session, a patient gets the full treatment at her clinic. And Annick claims that a crippled woman has walked normally again, food allergies have vanished under her hands and asthmatics have breathed freely.

She said: "It's called Reconnective Therapy and has a 90 per cent success rate. The treatment is a combination of gentle massage and diet. The diet may seem weird at first as people have a three-course meal for breakfast."

"We even encourage men to eat red meat at least twice a week. It helps their bedroom performance. And there is no ban on puddings."

As 28-year-old Annick, from Lyon, France, finished rearranging my vertebrae and began to work on the muscles of my shoulder, a feeling of bliss soaked my body.

She said: "When I treat patients, I can tell in which part of their body they have problems. They tell me where they feel tender as I touch them. This enables me to see what is wrong with them and where any problems lie."

"I can tell that you are healthy. But you have bad posture, which has made your spine curved. For two months you must stand straight, and correct your posture... then come back for more treatment."

Annick has been running her clinic in Hove, Sussex, for four years. She brought the treatment to England after spending ten years studying with Pierre Marion, a therapist who had revived the ancient healing art in France.

She said: "I asked Pierre to teach me how to do reconnection therapy after I saw him cure my father. He had been crippled by an accident and could not move for eight months."

"Pierre visited our house and gently massaged his back. After six sessions, my father could walk. The pain never returned."

She now works with 67-year-old Pierre who has been studying reconnection therapy for the last 43 years. He is now teaching other people what he taught Annick. He told me: "Very few people qualify. It takes three dedicated years to learn the art of reconnection therapy. It is a method that goes back to ancient Egypt."

But according to Pierre and Annick, the results of the "magic touch" can be miraculous. Annick explained: "Many of the people who come to us have given up hope. They have been to dozens of other experts. But, often, we can cure them — so long as the patient is committed to getting better."

Then Annick opened her casebook for me. She said: "One patient was a professional pianist called George Crisp. He was afraid he would never play again. George had terrible pain and his fingers moved less and less after suffering from spondylitis. This is a rheumatic disease which affects the joints."

"His hospital offered him aspirins to ease the pain. But doctors held out no hope of a cure. After eight sessions here, George made a complete recovery. Three years later he is still fine and playing the piano."

Then bachelor girl Annick told of the handsome man, pursued by beautiful women, who came to her and admitted what he considered to be a terrible secret. She said: "This chap, who for obvious reasons I won't name, said he was impotent."

"When I questioned him, he said he had completely given up eating red meat. I put him on my diet, which means having red meat at least twice a week, and he no longer has his problem."

Then there was the dramatic case of 63-year-old Veronica, who could only hobble around in agony. Annick reported: "For eight years, Veronica had suffered terribly from arthritis and sciatica. She was barely able to walk. Veronica was overweight and had high blood pressure."

"She had tried doctors, specialists and therapists — all in vain. Then Veronica started an intensive

Frenchwoman Annick Laboure believes a mixture of ancient Egyptian massage and a revolutionary eating pattern can make a cripple walk normally, an asthmatic breathe freely and a food allergy vanish. And she claims her red meat diet can make a man a tiger in the bedroom. Reports Faith Mail.

course of treatment here. Within six months she was pain-free, was able to walk with ease, and her blood pressure was down. She was a very grateful patient."

Then Annick told me about the case of the man-cursor from America who became so ill that she lost her job. She said: "Dorothy had torn the muscles and ligaments of her left foot in an accident. Her foot had never healed properly and doctors and specialists in America said they could do nothing for her."

"Dorothy even found standing up was very painful. After three treatments here, she was able to walk without feeling any pain. Dorothy told us that she'd never felt so good."

Annick also helped a teenager lose weight after a year of dieting had failed. She told me: "The girl was having normal adolescence problems and lacked self-confidence because of her weight. She came to the clinic and, by applying pressure to her spine, I diagnosed an over-active thyroid gland. So I put her on our special eating plan, and she lost two stone (28 lbs) over a few months."

So what is the wonder diet that lets you eat as much as you like, so long as it is at the right time? Annick explained: "You eat your three-course main meal between 4am and 9am. You can eat what you like, even pudding, and can have a glass of wine. But you must also drink at least three pints of water or very weak tea with the meal."

"Drinking lots of water helps with the digestion of food. Also energy from the food is burned off quicker in the morning because the body has more need for it at the start of the day."

"We tell patients to chew each mouthful thoroughly, then take a sip after each mouthful. And recommend eating red meat, especially men, who should have it twice a week."

She went on: "It is essential to go to bed by 9pm at least five nights a week in order to be able to eat a lot early in the morning."

The second meal should be eaten between 8am and 2pm. The meal must be three times smaller than the first and should not contain starchy food, too much fat or oil, or any food you are allergic to.

"It is important not to go back to bed after a meal. Wait at least two hours after the first meal and three hours after the second meal."

And how does that magic touch work? Annick explained: "I work on the theory that the body contains a system of memory banks — specific places in the reconnection tissues where tensions are stored."

By touching the back and between the shoulder-blades Annick can detect these memory banks and diagnose illnesses. She said: "There's a nervous system memory bank and a heart memory bank in the shoulder-blade area. There are also memory banks for allergy, the lungs and the liver."

"These are like cassette tapes and every trauma is recorded on them. If a bank becomes full, physical or emotional illnesses follow."

"An important part of our treatment consists of massaging the appropriate points to empty the banks and wipe out the effects of stress."

Annick examining my shoulder-blades, told me: "Your memory banks are still quite empty. You seem to have no problems."

"But you really should correct that posture now or you'll have back problems later on."

I promised to stand up straight, eat dinner for breakfast and report for another spine-tinkling session in two months' time.



Annick correcting reporter's posture.

Women in combat

Uncle Sam says no to testing skills

WASHINGTON, (Reuters): Women have the skills for combat but many lack the stamina and ability to engage in what is called disciplined violence, even if they are physically fit, military experts say.

But the question of how well women could fight is academic because the United States Congress is disinclined to put them in combat units even on a test basis.

Women in the US military can fly combat missions, command ships, fire guns, launch missiles, drop bombs — in fact any combat job in the air force or navy, officials say.

But the navy's highest ranking woman, Rear Admiral Roberta Hazard, says women's proven ability to perform such jobs "wonderfully well" is not the issue.

"It is the motivation of not a few women but all women who might be involved in this to engage in what I call disciplined violence, even if they are physically fit," she said.

"It's the sustained combat environment which you're not going to replicate under any set of circumstances other than combat itself," she told a Senate Defence Subcommittee.

The admiral said she did not believe either the navy or Americans in general were ready to test women's combat ability by actually putting them in it.

Tests in Canada, which has begun putting women into combat units, have found they can do the air force and navy combat jobs but most

do not have the stamina for day after day of infantry warfare, said Commander Judith Harper who conducted the tests.

"It is not: can you throw a grenade? Can you walk 40 miles? Can you carry a heavy backpack?" said Harper, director of Canada's combat related employment of women (crew) programme.

"It is: can you throw the grenade after 40 miles of walking with the backpack?" she said.

She said more men can do it because of lifetimes of physical competition and said it would take years of raising girls the same way to prepare them for infantry combat.

One Canadian woman, private Heather Erath, is already prepared and is serving along-

side men in a Canadian battle course and 40 others dropped out when they saw how tough the training would be.

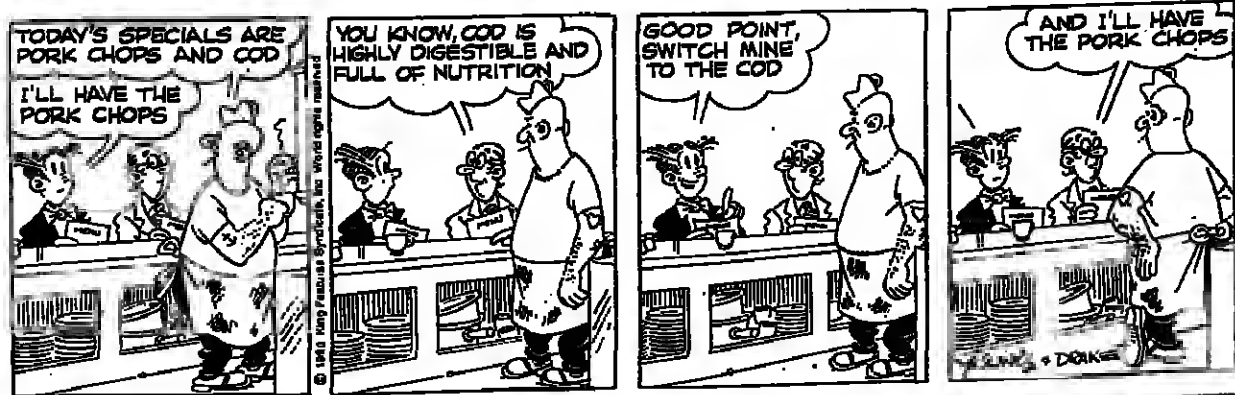
Whether women can be effective killers in warfare has not yet been determined, Harper said.

"We know women can be aggressive when don't know what the effect will be of women in combat."

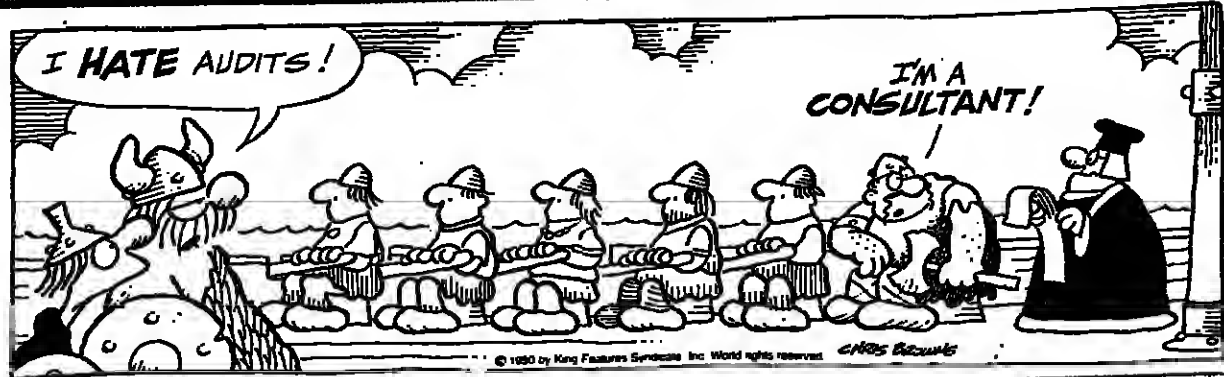
Canada's Human Rights Commission ruled last month, following Harper's tests, that women must be integrated into Canadian combat units "with all due speed."

Norway, Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands are also putting women into combat units.

BLONDIE



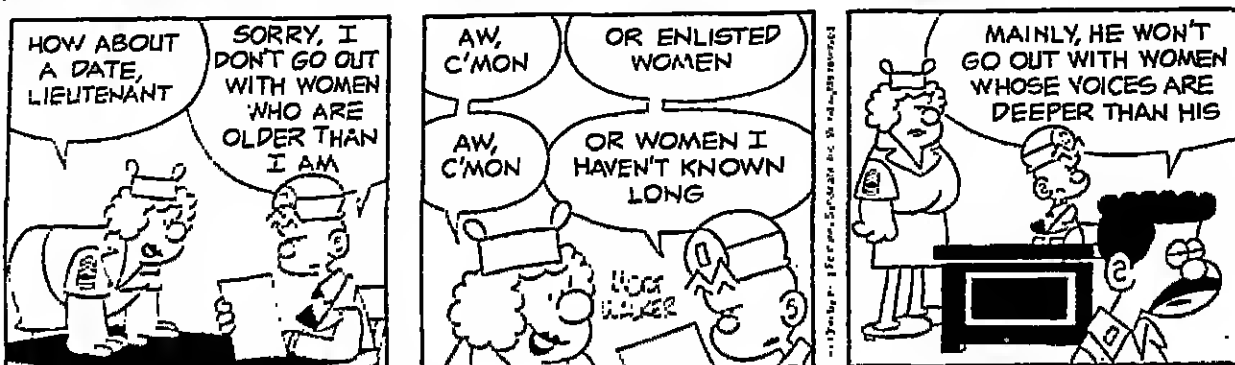
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



AGATHA CRUMM



BEETLE BAILEY



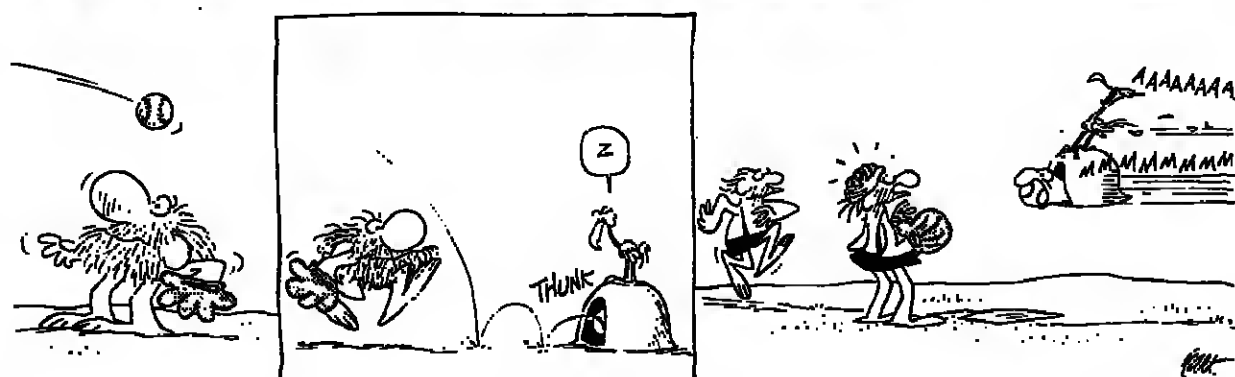
THE WIZARD OF ID



ANDY CAPP



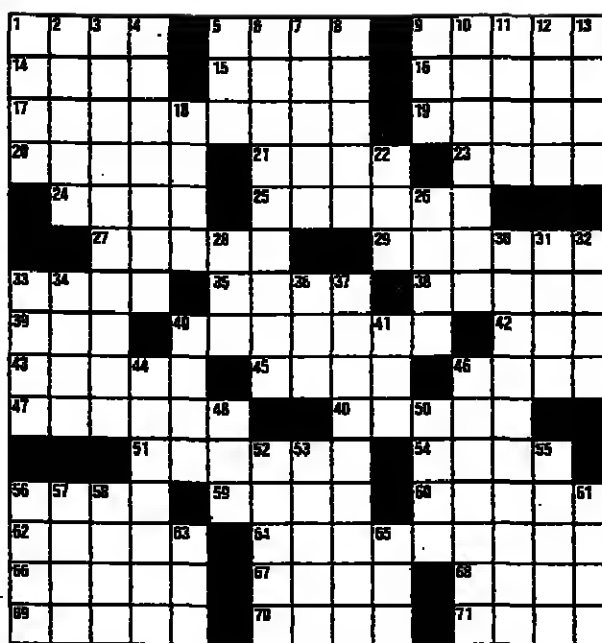
B.C.



HE-MAN



TODAY'S CROSSWORD



- ACROSS
- Record
 - River of SW Maine
 - Chemical compound
 - Nanking nursemaid
 - One of Spain's longest rivers
 - Fable ender
 - Spanish artist: 1599-1660
 - Simpson of fashion
 - French floor
 - Fads
 - Entertainer Adams
 - "... for All Seasons"
 - Average
 - "... facing and ..."
 - Wordsworth
 - Turns inside out
 - DDE was one
 - Peruvian
 - Utopian
 - Free of
 - Turned in
 - Corn or pod lead-in
 - Marliness
 - H.H. Munro
 - Bt
 - Calm
 - Very, to Verdi
 - Italian artist: 1488-1576
 - "... Diary ..."
 - Twain
 - Chief
 - Black birds
 - good account of (acquit oneself)
 - German artist: 1471-1528
 - French artist:
- DOWN
- Brubeck
 - man with...
 - Elf
 - Russian-French artist: 1887-1985
 - Continued story: Abbr.
 - Supporting structures
 - de menche
 - Sleeped
 - "... little teapot..."
 - Was a cover girl
 - In a state of pique
 - Spanish artist: 1904-1989
 - Robt. —
 - Notable stoic
 - Never, to Hans
 - Eager
 - 1732-1806
 - Grenoble's river
 - Sicilian spewer
 - Attired
 - "... Three": 1936 film
 - Arctic sea
 - Sister of Osiris
 - Restoration possibilities
 - Fictional plantation
 - Slender
 - Mardi —
 - Hibernia
 - OSS follower
 - Little Rock natives
 - Italian artist: 1575-1642
 - Frozen dessert, in Dortmund
 - Attaches a leash
 - Italian artist: 1452-1519
 - Airline abbr.
 - Utah's state flower
 - Deduce
 - ground missile
 - Caravansary
 - Mine entrance
 - Make haste
 - Manitoba Indian
 - Supplements
 - Sandpiper
 - Road sign

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

COMES STRAD ROTT
ORALE SWAMI DOO
OYLAN THOMAS BEO
ROO PICKERS
JOHN RY RENOR
ROUE LEAD VETICH
EDGY ART BELFIRY
ADE SNEAKER REE
OENTE TO T SOON
SNEER BARI ISLA
FAIROUT MATTEIS
PRIMACY ECU
LIE THOMAS HAROY
ALL ERUPT ETUOIE
NED SETAE DEBIS

GOREN BRIDGE

USE YOUR ENTRIES WELL

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH

♠ A 7 6 2
♥ K Q 4 2
♦ A 9 5
♣ 9 3

WEST

♠ J 9 8
♥ A 10 8 5
♦ K Q J 7
♣ 10 6

EAST

♠ Q 10
♥ J 9
♦ 10 4 3
♣ Q 8 7 5 4 2

SOUTH

♠ K 5 4 3
♥ 7 6 3
♦ 8 6 2
♣ A K J

The bidding:

North	East	South	West
1 ♠	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠

When your contract is not a thing of beauty, you must take care to manage your assets to yield the maximum return. The last thing you can afford is to squander a key entry or seemingly unimportant court card.

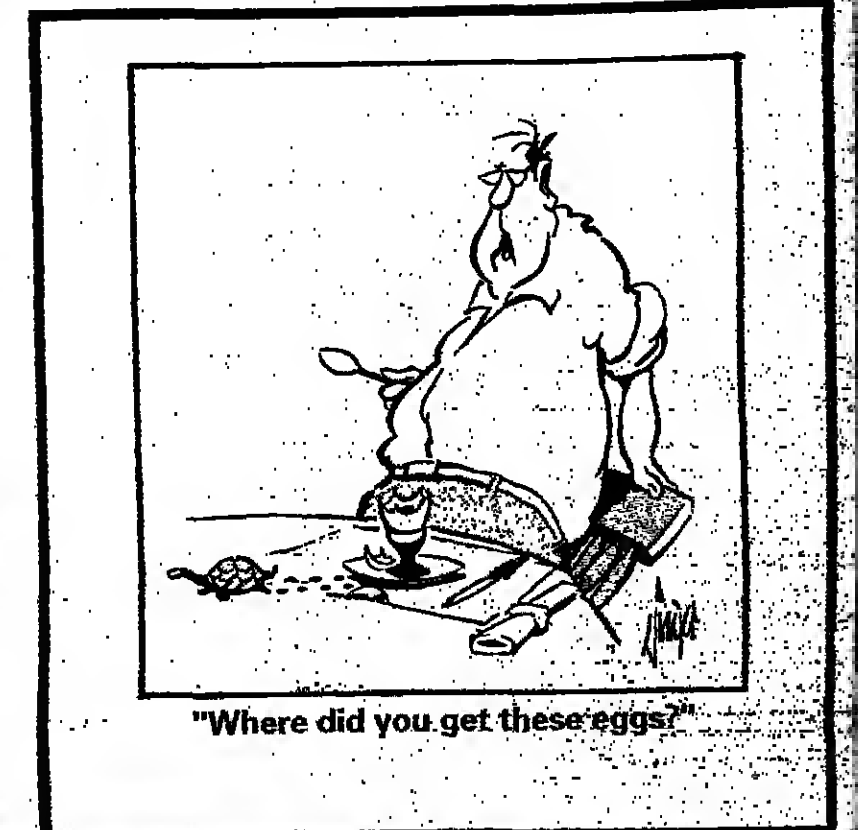
North-South reached a four-spade contract that was, to say the least, precarious. We are not enthralled with South's game invitation of three spades. That action normally promises a five-card

trump holding, and South should have deducted a point from the count because of the square shape and lack of intermediates. Thus, game is unlikely in view of North's single raise.

West led the top of the diamond sequence and declarer did not fancy his prospects. Even with a 3-2 trump split, there was a sure loser in each major suit, so South could not afford to lose more than one diamond. In addition, he would have to find the ace of hearts with West, as well as entries to hand, to lead hearts twice toward dummy.

After a routine duck of the opening lead, declarer won the diamond continuation and then finessed the jack of clubs. When that held, declarer took his two high clubs, discarding the table's remaining diamond. West elected not to ruff, instead discarding a diamond.

A low heart was led toward the board's honors. West played low and the king won. Now, ace and king of trumps put declarer in hand to lead a second heart toward dummy. The best West could do was to rise with the ace and extract a third round of trumps, but declarer was home with three trump tricks, two hearts, a diamond, three clubs and a diamond ruff.



YOUR STARS



You have made a mistake but there is still time to correct it. Discuss things with your partner before taking action. Your lucky numbers are 9 and 36. Do not be premature in entrusting a confidence to a new acquaintance. Be cordial.



You should not allow your emotions to take precedence over your reason. However, do ensure that you do not altogether suppress your emotions either. Try to rid yourself of some prejudices. Be reliable.



You will be able to do something you have long wanted to do. And you will be very happy you have done so. You should be prepared to take the matter to a little more seriously. Be moderate.



You will encounter an obstacle you had not foreseen but it will be within your powers to deal with it. You should, however, use a little more commonsense. Fanciful methods are not appropriate right now. Make sure you do not waste time. Be less greedy.



You would be wrong to pretend to knowledge you have not got, far better to admit your ignorance on this subject. You are rather more liable to lose your way, best to carry a map with you. Do not have too many late nights in succession, you need to be well rested just now.



Not everything will be quite to your liking. However, if you are sensible you will yet be able to do what you know has to be done. Try to see things from other people's point of view, too. Be sensible.



You are more liable to quarrel with a friend and should be on your guard against doing so. A good opportunity is in danger of being missed because you do not realize it is there until too late. You should avoid trying to do too many things all at once. Be generous.



Try to ensure that you do not do anything that would interfere with the legitimate activities of others. Make sure you do not loose touch with a friend who has moved to another location. Be sincere.



Show more respect for your elders — one day you will be like them. Someone you had thought to be a friend of yours will turn out not to be. Make sure you do not reveal something told to you in confidence. Be punctual.



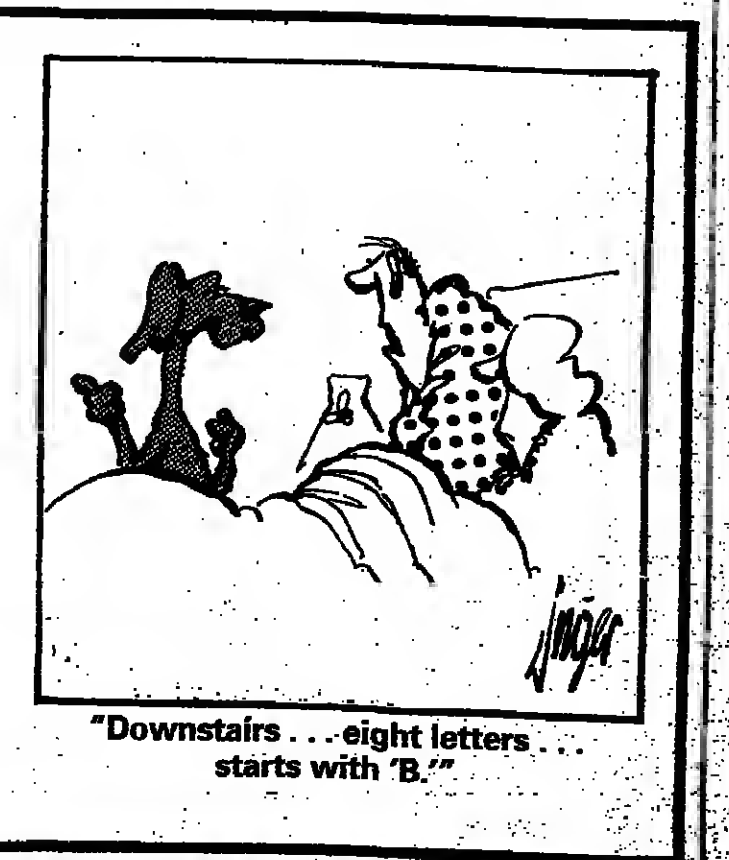
You should beware of exaggerations. And do not ignore certain restrictions that have been placed for your own good, too. You will have something to be pleased about where your personal affairs are concerned.



You will be more lucky than you have been of late, but more in a negative way of what has not happened to you. Avoid spending money in the hope that a certain eventuality that is all too likely to happen will not.



You are rather too inclined to postpone things, beware of so doing. Do not expect others to beat your bid and call. Show just a little more restraint, but do not lapse into passivity. Be tactful.



SPORTS

England manager deflated after series defeat

ST JOHN'S, Antigua, April 17, (Reuters): England manager Micky Stewart admitted to feeling deflated after his side had lost the final cricket Test and with it the series against West Indies yesterday.

"We've worked so hard and come away beaten. But I hope that the younger players in the squad will come back here again and use what they have learned to win a series here," he said.

England were 1-0 up after the first three

matches but West Indies fought back to win the final two. West Indies captain Viv Richards said he was particularly proud of this.

"A lot of people have not seen us with our backs to the wall and the way we came back in this series was magnificent. I did say after we lost in Jamaica that I thought the best team would win the series and I think that has happened," he said.

"This was a magnificent series and England were a much better side than we expected."

Richards, who was presented with Antigua's Order of Distinction after the match, admitted there had been "a few little stiffs" during the series but said they were nothing out of the ordinary.

In an obvious reference to his threat to hit a British journalist last Friday, the West Indies skipper said: "I'd like to think we're all feeling

a bit guilty about what happened. But let sleeping dogs lie."

West Indies manager Clive Lloyd said there was a need for young West Indians to come through as batsmen of true Test class.

"We must get out younger players to follow the attitudes of the Greenidge and such. We are adequately served in the bowling department but it is time for young batsmen to show ability for the future," he said.

W. Indies pacemen rout England

Richards & Co. win Test series

ST JOHN'S, Antigua, April 17, (Reuters): Another sustained spell of hostile fast bowling saw West Indies crush England by an innings and 32 runs with more than a day to spare to win the fifth and final cricket Test yesterday and clinch the series 2-1.

What little hope England had of avoiding defeat rapidly disappeared when two wickets fell to inept strokes soon after they started the fourth day on 16 for one in their second innings.

Needing 186 to make West Indies bat again, England were dismissed for 154 in only 47 overs — a miserable end to a series which had once led 1-0.

The most cruel blow of all came when batting stalwart Robin Smith was forced to retire because of a broken finger.

Only then did the England camp reveal that his right index finger had been broken by a ball in England's first innings on the opening day.

Courageously, Smith decided to continue playing but after batting in considerable pain for an hour, during which he was twice more struck on the same hand, he was forced to retire after scoring eight.

That effectively spelt the end for England and only three batsmen showed any real defiance.

Captain Allan Lamb made a pugnacious 35. Jack Russell contributed a typically stubborn 24 and Nasser Hussain followed up his first innings 35 with 34 and was once again the last man out. But the remainder of the bats-



Ambrose: Man of the series

men showed little fight against a typically aggressive West Indian bowling attack, particularly Curtly Ambrose who finished

with four wickets for 22 and Ian Bishop (three for 36). England's casualty list became even longer when it was announced

after the match that Hussain had also batted under the handicap of a broken bone in his left wrist.

The visitors lost their first two wickets to ill-judged shots. Alec Stewart fell for eight after only 14 minutes play when he failed to get over a ball from Bishop and gave Richie Richardson a head-high catch at cover.

Rob Bailey's dismissal, also for eight, was almost unforgivable. Having been dropped by Jeff Dujon off the previous delivery from Bishop, Bailey slashed at the next and this time the wicketkeeper made no mistake.

Dujon was clearly grateful for the quick chance to make amends, looking skywards and holding his hands together as if in a silent prayer of thanks.

In the following over England were reduced to 37 for four when Gladstone Small's vigils as night-watchman came to an end. A short ball from Ambrose hit him on the body and Small could only watch in horror as the ball trickled back on to his off stump.

The crucial wicket of Lamb fell soon after lunch when Eldine Baptiste claimed his only victim of the match, nipping one back to bowl the England captain between bat and pad.

David Capel was run out for one when Hussain refused a second and only a breezy but by then meaningless 54 at more than a run a minute by Russell and Hussain gave the visiting English fans something to enthuse over. Ambrose, who was named

Man of the Series with 20 wickets in the three Tests he played, returned to dismiss Russell and then Phillip DeFreitas three balls later.

Desmond Haynes was named Man of the Match for his magnificent 167, made in almost nine hours of unflinching concentration.

Scoreboard

ENGLAND first innings 260 (L. Bishop five for 84)
WEST INDIES first innings 446 (D. Haynes 167, G. Greenidge 149, D. Malcolm four for 126)

ENGLAND second innings (over-

night 16 for one)

A. Stewart c Richardson b Bishop 8

W. Larkins b Ambrose 10

G. Small b Ambrose 4

R. Bailey c Dujon b Bishop 8

A. Lamb b Baptiste 35

R. Smith retired hurt 8

N. Hussain c Dujon b Bishop 34

D. Capel run out 1

J. Russell c Richardson b Ambrose 24

F. DeFreitas c Greenidge 0

Ambrose 20

D. Malcolm not out 21

Extras (b-1 lb-8 w-1 nb-11) 21

Total 154

Fall of wickets: 1-16 2-20 3-33 4-37

5-86 6-94 7-148 8-148 9-154

Bowling: Bishop 14-2-36-3

Ambrose 13-7-22-4, Walsh 10-1-40-0

Baptiste 10-1-47-1

Result: West Indies won by an

innings and 32 runs.

First Test: Kingston, Jamaica —

England won by five wickets

Second Test: Georgetown, Guyana — abandoned, rain

Third Test: Port of Spain, Trinidad

— draw

Fourth Test: Bridgetown, Barbados —

West Indies won by 154 runs

Series: West Indies won 2-1



Rally winners

Sweden's Bjorn Waldegard (left) and co-driver Fred Gallagher of Britain get ready to spray champagne after winning the Kenya Safari Rally in Nairobi on Monday. This was the 4th Safari win for Waldegard. (Reuters wirephoto)

Table Tennis

Appelgren takes third Euro-title

GOTEBORG, Sweden, April 17, (AP): Mikael Appelgren of Sweden won an unprecedented third singles title at the European Table Tennis Championships yesterday, beating Andrzej Grubba of Poland, 21-15, 15-21, 21-15, 21-19.

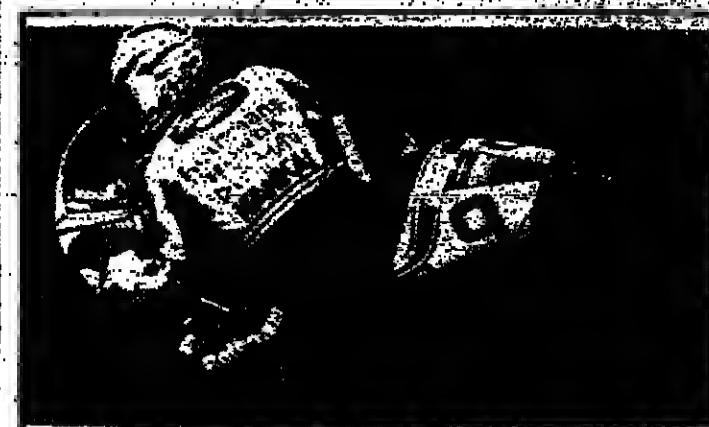
Appelgren, who also won last year and in 1982, set the stage for his victory in the finals by rallying to defeat Jorg Rosskopf of West Germany earlier yesterday in the semifinals, 18-21, 21-17, 19-21, 21-13, 21-16.

Other former champions who were competing included Zoltan Berzsek of Hungary along with Appelgren's compatriots Kjell Johansson and world champion Jan Ove Waldner.

Problems
"I was far from sure I would defeat Andrzej (Grubba) before the match. I have problems playing him and he has beaten me more often than I have defeated him," Appelgren told Swedish television. "I knew I had to play extremely well to win."

He credited a great serve for the win.
"I don't think I have ever served better than today," he said. "That was one of the reasons behind my victory today. Another was that I won a number of points in very sensitive situations."

Gardner, Doohan seek to stop Rainey



Doohan: looking forward to Spanish Grand Prix

AUSTRALIANS Wayne Gardner and Michael Doohan will be flat out to prevent Californian Wayne Rainey from securing his third Grand Prix victory in succession at the Spanish Grand Prix at Jerez on May 6.

The Yamaha star has won the opening two rounds of the championship and leads the 500cc table by an impressive 16 points.

However, both Rothmans Honda stars Gardner and Doohan have grabbed second places but have also crashed. They share fourth place in the table with 17 points each.

Doohan was a brilliant second at the American Grand Prix, his best ever Grand Prix position. He's looking forward to continuing the good work at the tight, demanding Jerez Circuit.

"I was so happy with my ride in America and I can't wait to get into Europe," explained the 24-year-old Queenslanders. "After all my problems during the winter and in Japan it was great to score points."

His team-mate, Wayne Gardner, crashed on the second lap in America. He's determined to cut back Rainey's advantage.
"I think all riders look forward to getting into Europe and setting into a regular pattern. I won the race at Jerez in 1987 and it's a very hard track both for rider and machine. Although Rainey leads me by 23 points in the championships, the title race is far from over and I am to close the gap in Spain."

Neither world champion, Eddie Lawson, nor Australian Kevin Magee will be on the grid at Jerez after crashing in America.
French Rothmans Honda star, Dominique Sarron, currently lies fourth in the 250cc World Championship after a brave ride in America, salvaging fifth place after starting the race in 19th position.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Baseball games

NEW YORK, April 17, (Reuters): Results of Major League baseball games played yesterday:

American League	National League
Milwaukee 15 Boston 0	N.Y. Mets 10 Chicago C 1
Toronto 4 Baltimore 2	Montreal 5 Philadelphia 4
Cleveland 6 Kansas City 3	St. Louis 6 Pittsburgh 4
Seattle 6 Minnesota 3	Cincinnati 5 Atlanta 1
	S.F. Francisco 3 Los Angeles 1

Golf rankings

LONDON, April 17, (Reuters): Greg Norman's fourth place in the Heritage Classic at Hiltop Head Island on Sunday was enough for him to stay firmly in place at the top of the world golf rankings issued yesterday. Nick Faldo, who finished 16th, stays in second place while Mark Calcavecchia climbs three places to fifth.

Dutch soccer

AMSTERDAM, April 17, (Reuters): Ajax Amsterdam thrashed struggling BVV Den Bosch 6-0 at home yesterday in their Dutch League Soccer Championship hopes alive. Champions PSV Eindhoven, with 45 points, stayed one point ahead of Ajax after scraping a 1-0 home win against the spirited but low-ranking FC Utrecht. But Ajax have four games remaining to PSV's three.

New manager

LONDON, April 17, (Reuters): Millwall, already doomed to relegation, yesterday appointed former Scotland captain Bruce Rioch as their new manager following a string of defeats in the English soccer First Division.

Nice Open

NICE, France, April 17, (Reuters): Seventh seed Petr Korda of Czechoslovakia and eighth seed Jordi Arrese of Spain tumbled out of the \$260,000 Nice Open men's tennis tournament in first round matches on the opening day yesterday.

USA beaten

FRIBOURG, Switzerland, April 17, (AP): Team USA, using a lineup containing only four NHL players, was routed 7-1 by Czechoslovakia last night in its opening game at the World Hockey Championships. Team Canada beat West Germany 5-1. The Soviet Union, the defending champion, blitzed Norway 9-1 and Sweden beat archival Finland 4-2 at Bern.

SAS bridge

RESULTS of the SAS Bridge Club game played on Sunday:
1st N. Akel & L. Murthwaite
2nd E. Keralis & G. Chakhtour
3rd D. Materny & B. Munsall
N. Arabi & R. Abboushi

Joshi holds on to edge past Playa

THE Veteran singles match between M.M. Joshi and G.S. Playa was the most exciting match on Monday in the India Festival badminton tournament, being held at the Indian Arts Circle.

The match was a very close affair with both the players vying for supremacy until the end. Joshi, however, finally prevailed and won the match 18-13 17-14.

In the girls' singles Saju Thomas and Regi Varghese put on a good game of badminton until Thomas won 15-10 15-8.

R. Suresh beat young Joseph Phillips in three games, 15-12 7-15 15-5, in the junior boys' singles.

Another girls' singles match between N.C. Mathew and P.I. Chacko resulted in the former winning 15-12 15-13 while T.S. Murugavel and Mohan Uchary beat Koshi Thomas and Varghese Joseph 8-15 15-10 15-6 in the men's doubles.

In the other matches Bal Sharma beat Dr. Srivastava 15-5, 15-9, Saja Varghese and Renoy John beat Dr. Maya Srivastava and A. Nazareth 15-5 15-7 while C. George and Reji Joseph defeated Bobby Chenoa and George Varghese 17-16 15-7.

Fixture for this evening: Girls' singles: Saju Joseph vs Shiva Kumar 8.00pm
Junior boys' singles (finals): R. Suresh vs Hashwardhan 7.30 pm
Mixed doubles: Saja Varghese and Saji Varghese vs Renny Therman and R. D'Silva 8.30 pm
Veteran doubles (finals): M.M. Joshi & John Kurian vs Bal Sharma and G.S. Playa 9.00 pm
Girls' doubles: R.D'Silva and Saji Varghese vs Johnsoo and Mohan Das vs Mahesh Thomas and Renny Joseph.

Martinez wins

LARGO, Fla., April 17, (Reuters): Third seeded defending champion Conchita Martinez of Spain celebrated her 18th birthday with a first round victory at the \$225,000 Largo Open tennis tournament yesterday.

The eighth-ranked Martinez dominated a second set tiebreak 7-1 to eliminate Argentine Bettina Fulco 6-1 7-6.

Fourth seed Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria overwhelmed Silvia la Fratta of Italy 6-1 6-0 to join Martinez in the second round, but fifth seed Laura Gildemeister of Peru became the tournament's first upset victim when she fell to 132nd-ranked West German Silke Meier 6-1 6-4.

Middle East champion in Cyprus

Sulayem needs big team effort for win

DUBAI: If Mohammed Bin Sulayem wins the International Tour of Cyprus Rally later this month, the Middle East champion will be able to point to a tremendous team effort as a major reason for his success.

Sulayem will have to produce one of the finest performances of his career in order to claim victory in an event which has been dominated by Cypriot drivers throughout its six-year history.

In addition to the versatile driving skills which have carried him to 17 international triumphs so far, the UAE star will be relying heavily on maximum back-up from the Winston Toyota team Middle East and its European counterpart.

A fortnight ago, the team's 70-foot trailer left Dubai for Cyprus, carrying the Winston Toyota Celica GT-4 Group A rally car, two service vans, a practice vehicle, chase car, and a full load of spare tyres and parts, it set off by road through Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria.

A week later, three of the team's mechanics left Dubai for Kenya to assist Toyota team Europe's three-car effort in the World Championship Safari Rally.

After that event finished on Monday the mechanics headed back for Dubai and yesterday they were to join Sulayem aboard a flight bound for Cyprus. They will all be reunited on the island with Sulayem's regular co-driver, Irishman Ronan Morgan, who jets in from the UK.

To complete preparations for the 700-km Tour of Cyprus on April 28 and 29, two specialist mechanics will arrive from Toyota team Europe's base in Germany to carry out final work on the engine and gearbox on the eve of the rally.

The man with the job of making sure that everyone, and everything, arrives in Cyprus at the right time, is Winston Toyota Team Middle East manager, Terry Plant.



Sulayem (left) with his mechanics.

"Yes, the operation is a bit of a headache," said Plant. "We've already had one setback because the ferry which the team trailer was supposed to catch in Syria

was cancelled. Now it will arrive in Cyprus six days late on April 18 — the day we start practising. We don't want any more hold-ups like that."

Lloyd finishes first in handicap event

AHMADI kart racing's final event of the season, the Friday 13th Handicap, was totally dominated by the forceful driving style of Simon Lloyd, who achieved a flawless score of 60 points to take top honours of the afternoon. Second was Peter Freisenegger (Mahdi Habib Com. Est) with 48 points and third was David Wheeler with 39.2 points.

Twelve drivers turned out for this popular event, in which everyone was handicapped according to their performance over the season, thus giving all but the front runners a better chance of taking a trophy — provided they did better than their own average.

In race 1, Lloyd soon took the lead from Bollig (Halliburton) and held it while Freisenegger followed into second. Gardiner (British Liason Team) came through from midfield to secure third place with Wheeler holding a steady fourth. Sandra Gardiner, in her



Lloyd (centre) with Freisenegger (left) and Wheeler on the victory podium

debut with the big boys, drove very well and managed to hold off a few more experienced drivers in the midfield until a broken chain ended her race.

Race 2 again saw Lloyd over the line first, with Freisenegger, Gardiner and Bollig in the next three places.

In Race 3, Lloyd had to work much harder and it was not until lap 8 that he managed to get past Freisenegger for the

lead. Third place was taken by Wheeler, who had steadily worked his way through from the back of the grid and fourth place went to Bollig, who seemed to have brought two coachloads of supporters with him.

In the final Handicap Race, Lloyd quickly took the lead from Wheeler who then refused to budge from second place. Behind them, Gardiner drove



Team race winners: Lloyd; Gardiner (centre), P. Wakely / Millin (left) and P&M Wakely.

defensively to hold third place from a persistent Freisenegger.

As a warm up to the Startrak International and the Akrotiri Road Race, both in Cyprus in early May, the last race of the day was a 20 lap team event with two drivers per kart and a compulsory driver change between laps 8 and 15. The steady driving of Gardiner and the forceful driving of Lloyd secured a clear win for this pair

with Peter Wakely/David Millin second and Paul & Michael Wakely third.

Ahmadi kart track will now be closed until mid September but the committee are actively pursuing many improvements to the facilities, not least of which is the introduction of a junior class for 11-16 year olds and a 125cc full bodied gearbox class. For information, call David Burfoot on 5732956.